

PC HOME

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NOVEMBER 1993 ISSUE 13 £3.95

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Classic adventure
gets video footage



SENSIBLE SOCCER -
How to score and
turn over your mates



Cover disks missing?
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Essential reading for Home PC users



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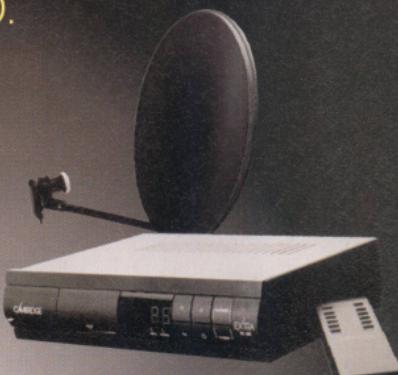
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Assistant art editor
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Editorial assistant
Chief sub editor
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The essential information you need to set up in business as a home DTP bureau. What's possible, what isn't and how much it's going to cost

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Advertising manager **Ron Loitch**
Deputy Ad manager **Lisa Bracewell**
Advertising sales **Susan Wrenshall**
Anthony Allen

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Fax: 0625 879964
Subscriptions: 051-357 2961
Disk enquiries: 0625 858084
Published by:
Europress Publications,
Europa House, Adlington Park,
Macclesfield SK10 4NP

PC Home welcomes articles for publication. Material should be typed or computer-printed, and preferably double-spaced. Program listings should be accompanied by disk. Please enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope, otherwise the return of material cannot be guaranteed. Contributions can only be accepted for publication by Europress Publications Ltd on an all-rights basis.

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Printed in Great Britain by BPCC Magazines (Carlisle) Ltd



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MegaDisks

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PC Home and Microsoft team up to bring you one of the most user-friendly DTP packages ever created. This special trial version includes a host of tools and even includes PageWizard, a complete design assistant that can automatically create templates for producing newsletters. Basic installation instructions start on Page 9.

Also on the MegaDisk:
Stellar Explorer - graphical adventure game; Utilities - Digital Clock and Chkm, handy tools for more efficient working; Star Trekking - a text-based adventure game and Sokoban - a neat puzzle game for Windows



Microsoft Publisher special offer

When you've seen how good Publisher is, turn to Page 38 to upgrade to the full version and get lots of extras FREE!



MegaDisk upgrades

PC Home not only brings you the very best software on the MegaDisk, we also have the very best upgrade offers to get you the software you want at the right price.

turn to Page 13

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turn to Page 52

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MegaDisk

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Microsoft Publisher 2 – Installation 10

Tutorial 35



This specially written demo version will enable you to try out many of the features of Microsoft's award-winning DTP program. Although it is aimed at the budget end of the market, this is a heavyweight package bristling with features. It's easy to use thanks to the Wizards which automatically create pages. This version cannot save and the word Demo is included on the printout.

Utilities: Disk 1 10



Digital Clock is a tiny TSR program that runs under Dos. It takes up very little memory and constantly displays the time in the top right-hand corner of the screen. There is also a pack of 10 Windows icons which can be used instead of any of the standard ones. A batch file MOVE utility will cut down on typing by effortlessly moving files from one disk or directory to another.

Utilities: Disk 2 10



Chkm is a quick and easy way to display the total amount of memory and disk space and show how much is free. Prevent images burning into the phosphor coating of your monitor screen by using the Sticks screen saver. The strangely named Y is an alternative directory display utility which shows the files in four columns on a VGA screen.

Stellar Explorer 12



In this huge graphical adventure you find yourself on board an alien spaceship in a rapidly decaying orbit around a planet. Your mission is to rescue the crippled craft before it disintegrates in the stratosphere and discover its sinister secret. Pick up and use items of equipment, talk to the alien crew and explore the different levels of the ship. It's a highly addictive interactive game.

Star Trekking 12

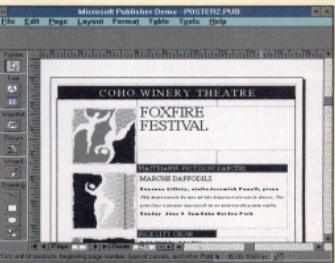


You've seen the film, watched the reruns of the television series – now play the adventure! This text game is set on board a Klingon battleship and your mission is to recover the stolen plans to the USS Enterprise and blow up the Klingon craft. There are many puzzles to solve and locations to explore. Where have the Klingons hidden the plans? How are you going to blow up the ship?

Sokoban 12



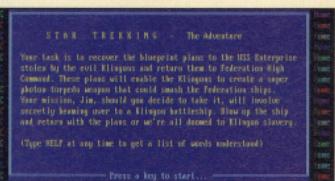
Sokoban is a classic Windows puzzle game in which you assume the role of an overworked underpaid stockperson in a large warehouse. Your workplace depicted in the form of a complex maze. The object of the game is to earn your wages. To do this you must neatly pack a set of crates on to the platforms provided on each of the increasingly difficult levels.



Microsoft Publisher 2 is a sophisticated desktop publishing program



Stellar Explorer is a space-based graphical adventure



Star Trekking – the adventure. Can you solve the puzzles?



Sokoban: An addictive Windows puzzle game

NO HD DRIVE?

Some readers may not have a high density disk drive in their PC – especially if they have an older specification machine. If the MegaDisk will not work with your PC, all you have to do is return the HD disk to the address below and you will receive two low density disks in return:

PC Home, HD Disk Swap, Europress Publications, FREEPOST, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK10 4YB

MICROSOFT PUBLISHER 2

Your three page
step-by-step
tutorial starts
on Page 35

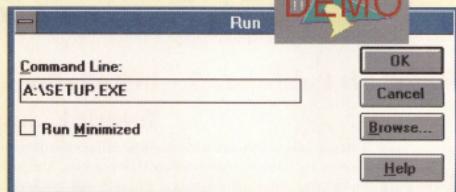
Requirements: Windows 3.1, 4Mb ram, 4Mb disk space

Directory installed to: C:\MSPUB

To run, click on the Publisher icon in Program Manager

THIS Publisher 2 demo is stored on two high density PC Home MegaDisks. To install the program you need to be running Windows 3.1, not the MegaDisk menu program. After booting up Windows click on File, Run then type in A:\SETUP and follow the instructions displayed on the screen.

After installation a new program group will have been created with two icons in. One displays the README file and the other runs Publisher – click on the latter to run the program.



To install Publisher 2 click on File, Run and enter A:\SETUP.
Put MegaDisk 1 in the drive and click on OK

UTILITIES

Requirements: Any PC

Directory installed to: C:\EXTRAS

ON the two MegaDisks are six utilities, comprising an icon pack, Chkm, Sticks, Y, Digital Clock and a batch program. They are all straightforward to use and one of the simplest is Y.

Just enter Y at the Dos prompt and you'll see a directory listing. The screen changes to a special 43-line VGA mode and the files are colour coded and shown in four columns. This makes it easy to see which are programs, data files and so on.

Chkm is another simple program and although the output is similar to CHKDSK, it's easier to understand the figures at a glance and the program runs much quicker. The hard disk size and the free space is shown and also the amount of base memory and how much is free for program use.

Sticks is a handy TSR Dos screen saver that takes up very little memory. You can install it with the default options by just typing STICKS at the Dos prompt, but there are some parameters you might like to alter.

Normally Sticks displays a kaleidoscope effect on the screen after a set period of computer inactivity, but this can be disabled by adding the /s switch after the name, which also saves memory. The /d delay time sets the number of seconds inactivity before Sticks kicks in. To see the instructions enter STICKS ?.

Digital Clock is another TSR program like Sticks but this one displays a digital clock in the top right-hand corner of the screen no matter what you are doing in Dos. It's great for keeping an eye on the time. To install it, just type DIGCLK at the Dos prompt. There are many different command switches and a screen of instructions can be displayed by typing DIGCLK /H.

The Windows icons can be used to replace the existing icons of Windows programs, or added to Dos programs that are installed into Program Manager groups – these don't have icons themselves.

Click once on the program icon to change, select Properties on the File menu and then on the Change Icon button. Now either type in the full path and filename for the new icon, or use the Browse facility to locate the one you want. Click on OK to get back to the desktop.

The MOVE.BAT batch program is the listing from this month's batch file programming tutorial on page 157. There is a full explanation in that article.

ossible command switches:
A - This Help screen.
B - Right corner of screen.
L - Left corner of screen.
B - Bottom corner of screen.
B - Black on white.
B - White on black or Blue.
Pan - Timer Alarm setting count.
D - Deactivate DIGCLK.COM
Press both Shift keys to turn clock On or Off.

The following example sets the clock display
at the top right corner in black/blue on white.
After 5 minutes pass the alarm sounds.
C:\>DIGCLK /L B - B

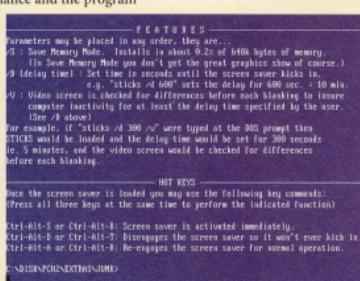
Must be two digits after the /L switch - Up to number 99.

The following example sets the clock display without
alarms at the bottom left corner in white on black/blue.
C:\>DIGCLK /L B - B

The /D switch to place at bottom screen.

C:\>DIGCLK /D B - B

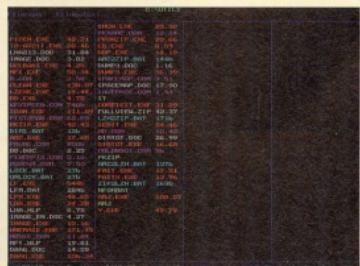
Y displays the current
directory in four columns



NOTE

These utilities are designed to work with any PC. However, they may not function with some configurations.

Sticks screen saver –
type STICKS ? to
see the help screens



The Digital Clock
help screen is
accessed by
typing DIGCLK /H

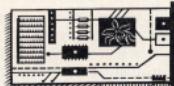
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STELLAR EXPLORER

Requirements: Any PC with VGA monitor

Directory installed to: C:\STELLAR

To run, at the Dos prompt, type: SE1

IN this shareware adventure game you are on board an alien spaceship in orbit around a planet. The ship is losing altitude and the orbit is decaying. Your mission is to save the craft from imminent destruction and solve the mystery that lurks within its hull.

Most of the screen display is taken up by the playing area and you are dead-centre – the brown circle with a green outline. Using the arrow keys on the numeric keypad (make sure Num Lock is on), you can move around the ship and explore the surroundings. Press M for a description of the various items on the map.

You'll soon run into other characters – also circular blobs – and you can chat with them and gain information or clues by pressing C, moving the highlight over them and pressing C again. Chat to them again if necessary. They may ask ques-



Stellar Explorer – can you save the ship from destruction?

tions or offer help or equipment.

To find out more about an object press S for the scanner, move the highlight over the object and press S again. Before you can fire a weapon you must first select a target. Press T and move the highlight then press T again. Press the spacebar to fire the selected weapon.

P picks up objects and D drops them. Press U to use an object – you'll see a description of each one and a Y/N prompt asking whether you want to use it.

All the instructions and other documentation, including the shareware registration form, are contained in the files README_1.DOC, INSTRUCT.DOC and NOTES.DOC.

Load them into a text editor or wordprocessor or just TYPE them at the Dos prompt.

STAR TREKKING

Requirements: Any PC with VGA monitor

Directory installed to: C:\EXTRAS

To run, at the Dos prompt, type: STARTREK

IT is now almost 30 years since the very first episode of Star Trek hit our TV screens. It has spawned feature films, arcade games, books and much more. Now, here is your opportunity to try the adventure.

In Star Trekking the Klingons have stolen the blueprint plans to the USS Enterprise, the Federation's most powerful starship. These plans will enable the Klingons to create a photon torpedo super weapon that will be able to smash through the Federation's defences.

Your mission is to beam aboard the Klingon battleship carrying the plans, locate them, blow up the ship and return safely.

The game starts as you appear in the Klingon ship's transporter room and you must return here with the plans just before the craft explodes in order to be transported back to safety.

This brand new challenge is only small but is the classic text-only type which many traditional adventurers prefer.

It contains several puzzles to solve and quite a few locations to explore. The command parser understands a dozen or so words and to see a list type HELP at the prompt.

What now? north

You are in the ship's main supplies centre.
A robot supplies operator is here.
A Klingon security guard's uniform is here.
What now? help
I'm a bit thick (so much for artificial intelligence!) and I only understand these words: north, south, east, unlock, examine, west, press, take, throw, fill, restock, wear, get, help, buy, quit
Your mission: Get the enterprise plans & blow up the Klingon ship

You are in the ship's main supplies centre.
A robot supplies operator is here.
A Klingon security guard's uniform is here.
What now? take uniform
He won't let you do that.

You are in the ship's main supplies centre.
A robot supplies operator is here.
A Klingon security guard's uniform is here.
What now?

Get the plans and blow up the Klingon ship to save us from slavery

SOKOBAN FOR WINDOWS

Directory installed to: C:\SOKO

Requirements: Any PC running Windows 3.1

To run: Double click from the File Manager

SOKOBAN is a small addictive puzzle game for Windows. In it you must guide a small star around a maze pushing blocks so that they are placed in a darkened area to one side of the screen.

To install the program select File, New from the Program Manager. Click OK then Browse through your hard disk for the SOKO directory and click on the SOKO.EXE file. Click OK twice and a new icon will appear in the currently opened program group.

To load the game either double click on the file from the File Manager or double click on the SOKO icon you have just created in the program group. To play the game click File, New and use the cursor keys to guide the star through the maze.

FAULTY DISKS?

The cover disks are thoroughly tested at every stage of production, but inevitably when such a large batch is duplicated, one or two bad ones will slip through. If you receive a faulty disk it will be replaced free of charge. Send it with your name and address to:

PC Wise, Dowlais Top Business Park, Dowlais, Merthyr Tydfil,
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If you damage the disk yourself, send it to the same address, but include a cheque or postal order for £1.85 (per HD 3.5in disk).

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NEWSLINE

Edited by Duncan Evans

CONTROLLING THE GAME

VIRTUAL reality comes to the PC courtesy of Logitech. They claim that their interactive 3-D controller for computer games is a world first. Cyberman has been developed for the latest generation of PC-based games and allow players to step right into 3-D graphic action.

The 3-D controller provides single handed control of movements in all axes without having to resort to the keyboard. Users receive direct dimensional control and a new type of sensory feedback that relates to whatever is happening in the game.

Cyberman provides six degrees of freedom to simulate true 3-D movement, as well as users being able to look around, lean forwards or backwards and leap out of the way of danger if need be.

The fully mouse compatible controller is priced at £99.88 (£85 ex VAT) and is available on 0344 891313.



Uncovering the facts

COVER Girl Strip Poker brings seedy software into the 90s claiming to be the first CD-Rom game to be issued with an 18 certificate.

Other CD games have been issued certificates, and the Lover's Guide on CD was issued before Cover Girl, but it doesn't go on sale until November.

The poker game itself features a range of girls filmed in various scenes of undress. For just £34.99 the player can listen to what the girls have to say for themselves as they slink about.

Creator of cover girl, Michael Lerner of On-Line (081-558 6114), says that the program has been placed in the age 18 or over category because of the overtly sexual scenes, though, in reality, these are limited to nudity.

For those who may be interested, although speech does not appear to be the key selling point, Cover Girl Poker comes in English, German, French and Spanish.



Videotastic clips

LTS are ramping up their multimedia output with their recent release of a video clips CD-Rom. The clips cover a wide range of subjects and are competitively priced at £45.83 (£39 ex VAT) and £116.33 (£99 ex VAT).

Topics including famous faces, famous places, special effects and various other titles are presented on 35 CD-Roms.

To find out more about the broadcast quality video contact 0386 792617.

More news from LTS is the release of three new Windows products:

Photomorph, priced at £116.33 (£99 ex VAT), Super Show and Tell, £116.33 (£99 ex VAT), and Jasmine's video clip CD-Rom collections ranging from £45.83 (£39 ex VAT) to £116.33 (£99 ex VAT).

Super Show and Tell allows the user to easily create interactive multimedia presentations, taking advantage of MPC compatible sound cards and other multimedia peripherals.

Photomorph is a complete software platform for importing disparate photographs or images and sequencing them together to produce a morph sequence of one image transforming smoothly into another. Further details on 0386 792617.



Photomorph will transform your images

A NEAT, compact label printer, the Smart Label Printer Pro, is now on the market. Seikosha have released it to print addresses, bar codes and pictures with a resolution equal to that of a laser.

With the wysiwyg screen and

Snippets

News of product releases from around the industry

Taken to the cleaners

DRIVE-CLEAN, a new intelligent dry cleaning disk has been released from K.I.M.S. (0483 285555). The ozone friendly cleaning disk operates as it sounds. Simply insert it in the drive, type *driveclean* and even the most stubborn hardened deposits are rapidly removed. The cleaning process and quality checks are all on one disk and any improvements to the read quality are immediately shown. Priced at £9.99 (£8.50 ex VAT) Drive-clean allows 20 complete cleaning passes.

Starting young

YET another educational release from 10 out of 10 (0742 780370). Early Essentials consists of six exciting games aiming to reinforce traditional educational values and provide a solid base for further school days. Topics including shapes and colour, numbers, the alphabet and time, and the child's progress is automatically recorded on an achievement chart. Priced at £24.99, this package covers 36 specific educational objectives.

Fairy tales

LISTEN to Lewis Carroll on your computer, well, the Reverend Dodgson. Discover the secret life of one of the world's best children's authors on CD-Rom from Nimbus (0633 867777). All his best stories, including Alice's adventures, are narrated on the disc named after his pseudonym. Discover his other talents and interests for just £41.13, as the author's personal letters and life history are presented.

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Under cover

SHHHHHHHHHHHHH! Panasonic are keeping quiet about their latest venture. They've extended their QuietPrinter range with the introduction of the KX-P2023. The narrow carriage 24-pin dot matrix, priced at £282 (£240 ex VAT), incorporates Panasonic's latest sound reduction technology which achieves sound levels quieter than inkjet and laser printers.

The unobtrusive user-friendly printer also features a help disk, easy-to-use front panel and paper setting facilities.

This easy-to-operate printer enables users to control functions from their PC screen using the setup disk provided. A free sheet feeder awaits any customer who buys one of these quiet little printers before January 1994. Contact Panasonic on 0344 853915 for further details.

Sound solution

A COMPLETE CD quality external sound solution for PC desktops and laptops has been released to provide sound capabilities for notebooks.

Unica have expanded their portfolio of audio solutions with the introduction of Portable Sound Plus. Based on Digital Signal Processor technology it supports stereo playback of 16-bit, digitised audio, 14-bit recording and both SoundBlaster and AdLib compatible music synthesis.

The battery or mains powered Portable Sound Plus simply plugs into the PC's parallel port and features a high quality omni-directional microphone and built in speaker.

Fully Microsoft Windows compatible it works with all MPC applications as well as most Dos programs. Priced at £175.10 (£149 ex VAT) the product comes with bundled software including Lotus Sound. Phone 061-429 0241 for more details.



Perfect Presentation

THE long awaited WordPerfect Presentations 2.0 for Windows is now available. Priced at £386.65 (£329 ex VAT) it is bundled with Logitech's Scanman Model 32.

Claimed to be the most comprehensive presentation graphics product in the industry, WordPerfect combines advanced presentation, charting, drawing, text and painting tools with support for TWAIN, OLE and direct CD-Rom sound.

Online tutorials are offered

demonstrating how to perform some of the most common tasks in WordPerfect Presentations with Quickcards available for times when users just need a quick reference card to refresh their memories.

Product marketing manager at WordPerfect UK (0932 850500) Daniel Summer, says: "WordPerfect Presentations introduces a best-of-class, all-in-one solution to the Windows presentation graphics market".

Doc to the rescue

DOCTOR SOLOMON's famous Recovery Service has vamped up its approach.

Experienced in recovering data from a wide range of file formats and hardware platforms, the company have now improved the speed and efficiency of the operation, which successfully recovers data

from a high percentage of the disks they receive. The price depends on the individual service carried out.

Customers are now guaranteed a 48-hour turnaround time and should it take longer, published prices will be discounted by 20 per cent. Contact 0442 877877 for details of this AA-style service.

Creating the right image

THE complete utilities package for graphics and publishing has been released from Riva (0753 620770), covering DTP, presentations and multimedia. The user can cater for individual needs by seeing, organising and accessing diverse resources in individual albums. Facilities for excellent screen shots and room for creative ideas are all part and parcel of ImagePals priced at £304.33 (£259 ex VAT).

Jive talk

HAVE fun playing a whole batch of music or sound files on your PC with the help of Sonic's Jukebox from Words and Pictures (0295 258335). Using Windows multitasking it allows you to listen to the selected music while you carry on with other computer tasks. Selections can be saved to disk so it is possible to switch quickly from one hit parade to another. A range of specially written digital themes and effects are included so the jukebox, priced at just £7.99 (£6.80 ex VAT) can be enjoyed straightaway.

Windows utilities

HUNDREDS of utilities and dozens of games and demos from many commercial Windows programs are all included on CICA Microsoft Windows on CD-Rom. The wealth of programs from Unica (061-429 0241) is an indispensable resource for any serious Windows user. At just £19.98 (£17 ex VAT) the hundreds of megabytes of Microsoft programs is value for money for any home user.

Cat call

TABBY, the cursor controller from Micrograf (0923 248222), claims to be quicker than a mouse, faster than a mouse, more efficient and a lot easier to use. Plug in Tabby and let the productivity flow. Priced at £49.95 (£42.51 ex VAT) it comes complete with Microsoft Windows 3.0 and 3.1 drivers.

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PC CONNECTIONS



Happy birthday!

IT'S celebration time in the Home office, *PC Home* is one year old this month. Our goal from the very beginning was to produce an entertaining and informative magazine for the home user – people like yourself.

The year has just flown by, so I have taken time out to take a personal look back over the last year.

From the very beginning we recognised that the market in the UK was far more sophisticated than many so-called industry gurus gave it credit.

The traditional view was that, with few exceptions, home users only had very early PCs and hard disks were considered to be uncommon. They also claimed the machines were only ever used for playing games or for wordprocessing.

The team – of which I am very proud to have been a member – that conceived the magazine, soon discovered this view was complete nonsense.

While these assumptions held true in a minority of cases, the vast majority were using 286, 386 and even 486 machines for a wide variety of applications: Graphics, music, hobbies, games, DIY, sport, business, education – the list goes on.

Rapid progress

Since Issue 1 went on sale, the market has progressed even further at an incredible pace. The sudden surge in sales of CD-rom drives has seen the appearance of innovative new multimedia suppliers like Unica and greater support with the release of products like Virgin's 7th Guest.

On the High Street, new PCs are now sold with respectably sized hard disks and MPCs are now sold off-the-peg in stores like Dixons.

While I still harbour doubts about the ability of retail outlets to put their house in order with respect to selling computers, the shops are selling more and more PCs.

On top of this, the buying trends on the High Street have made 486SX machines the biggest sellers by far which will result in an increase in the availability of high quality software for home users that can make use of that kind of processing power.

The launch of Microsoft's Consumer Products division in the UK is *prima facie* evidence of this move in the market. This new department is responsible for a wide variety of home user products, from games like Microsoft Golf to practical products like Microsoft Publisher 2 – see this month's MegaDisk to see how good this really is.

Moving into the games, there have been some spectacular developments – accompanied by some spectacular paranoia in the gutter press.

Quality, mature products like *Alone in the Dark*

from Infogrames, with its excellent 3-D graphics engine and cinematic camera angles, reinforced the PC's position as the serious games player's machine.

At the same time the newspapers decried all computer games as being the cause of everything from epilepsy to juvenile crime.

This scaremongering was, as usual, short lived – though none of the tabloids saw fit to print the truth behind any of the stories.

The *PC Home* MegaDisks have proved to be a resounding success and we have been pleased to bring our readers some outstanding – and exclusive – software including Microsoft Money and this month's Microsoft Publisher 2 demos.

Top commercial products worth hundreds of pounds have been given away and we have been first with the very best games with demos of *Alone in the Dark*, *Formula One Grand Prix* and *Worlds of Legend* to name but three.

Yes, without doubt it has been an interesting year. My heartfelt thanks go out to all of you who have supported the magazine during that time. To those who have picked up *PC Home* for the first time, welcome, I hope you have enjoyed the magazine and will join us again.

Help and advice

One thing is certain, the number of letters we receive every month is phenomenal, more than I have seen on any other magazine I have worked for.

Your comments and criticisms are taken very seriously and, while we cannot publish every single one, I do read them all.

We are also inundated with technical queries, so starting with the December issue, there'll be new advice service to answer all your questions in detail.

Finally a word to all our readers: The first year of *PC Home* has seen a lot of changes. Year two promises to be even more exciting with further rapid advances in the CD-rom market.

Next month sees the first special edition of *PC Home* with a CD-rom mounted on the front cover in the newsgagents, alongside the standard edition with floppy disks. Order yours now – see cover flap for details.

This is only a taste of what we have planned for the future so watch this space.



As *PC Home* celebrates its first anniversary, the editor reflects over the last 12 months and looks to the future

G. J. Start

Ged Start – Editor



Publish

THE last decade has seen some of the fastest breakthroughs in electronic technology. The home computer was quickly transformed into the personal computer and today, entry level PCs are so powerful that full blown desktop publishing is common place.

Most companies involved in print and publishing now use electronic DTP systems and the PC is now attracting more and more recognition as a serious tool for page layout and design, so much so that most typesetting bureaux are offering both Macintosh and PC runout facilities.

Quality DTP in the home too, is now well within the reach of the average user with a plethora of products on the market to suit almost every job. The difficult part is matching the complexity of the job with the software, and, ultimately, your bank balance.

For the home user, the ability to format a simple poster, letter head and occasional banner may well be sufficient.

For others, formatting text into columns and adding pictures will be closer to the mark.

So, which package is for you?

Paul Gaunt starts the ball rolling on how to get into print – with explanations, advice and reviews



Bo your

THE trick to finding a suitable DTP package is first to identify your exact requirements. This sounds easy, but, like everything in life, DTP needs are subject to change as time goes on, so forward planning is necessary.

In the first instances, you may simply like the idea of formulating pages on screen, but what if you get good at it and friends want some pages making up? Exactly, like your computer, you need a package that will not become outdated in only a few months.

Having identified the needs, ensure you have the equipment to support them. After all, there is no point in laying out a stunning page if it's destined to remain on screen because you haven't the facilities to print it out.

A printer is a vital part of any DTP set up. It allows you to output proof pages so that their contents can be checked. If errors are found, they can be corrected and re-printed for further checking. Running a DTP system without a printer is like owning a PC power supply without a PC – it might work, but how can you tell and what's the point?

I've occasionally heard people say that their pages will be run to film or bromide at a typesetting house, so a printer isn't needed. This is partially true, but the typesetting house will charge you for its service whether there are errors in the page or not.

Yelling, "Well, it looked fine on screen" at the top of your voice is not a valid argument for avoiding paying the invoice.

Wysiwyg

In the late eighties, a new buzzword arrived on the scene: *Wysiwyg*. It is an acronym for *What You See Is What You Get*.

In plain English, the term means that what you see on screen is what you get out of the printer. The term is not used as commonly now as in the early days, but still applies to some degree.

Many DTP packages sport this functionality, but it should be pointed out that with the huge number of differing display cards and monitors on the market, you may see that the printed output varies from the screen display. This is another argument for having a printer on hand to proof

self

the pages.

Although many companies offer just Windows support, it's good to see that some still offer Dos programs. Whatever your views on Windows, there is no getting away from the fact that DTP packages are better under Microsoft's Wimp environment.

One of the main advantages is in the fonts. Windows 3.1 makes use of the TrueType standard. This is a font system that sports many thousands of type styles under the Windows environment.

The big advantage is that TrueType fonts look the same on the printer as they do on screen and the same font information controls both images without the need to store screen and printer fonts separately, thus occupying more hard disk space.

Users of Windows 3.0 must have a copy of the Adobe Type Manager (ATM) in order to run most Windows-based DTP packages.

Dos applications cannot make use of the TrueType system and suffer as a result. Most Dos programs are supplied with a small range of fonts, but it is unlikely that any old font will be compatible and so your design options are severely restricted.

The other advantage of Windows over Dos is that you can multitask your applications; a huge bonus when playing about with pages.

Import and export

Most DTP systems allow you to import text and graphics from other packages. But, as any reasonably experienced PC user will know, most applications make use of their own file formats that are incompatible with other systems.

So, before laying out the cash, find out whether the program you are about to buy will accept files produced with the software you already possess, or buy some more software as well. Luckily, conversion packages for both text and graphics are easy to obtain, shareware offerings costing only a few pounds.

Desktop publishing is a processor intensive application and often requires an awful lot of memory and a fair chunk of hard disk space.

Naturally, as with any program, the better your graphics card and monitor, the better the pages will appear in phosphor. But, regardless of whether you've got EGA, VGA or SVGA, images should appear properly when printed.

Because of the sheer processor power required, it is not advisable to run DTP applications on 286-based machines, although this is possible with most packages. On a 486SX box with 100Mb hard drive and 4Mb of ram, most programs – as tested here – will operate at an acceptable speed. Many will run much faster if more

Jargon busting

Alignment The positioning of text on the page. It may be left, right or fully justified, centred or tabulated.

Aspect Ratio The relationship between the height and width of an object, typically a graphic.

Bitmap A type of graphic whose image is formed by individual pixels of varying colour. Such images are created with a paint program or scanner. Compare with line art.

Body Text The main text of a document.

CMYK Abbreviation for Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, Key. These are the four separation films required for full colour professional repro. Key is the black film.

Columns Subdivided areas of a printed page that contain text. The use of columns makes the text easier to read as the eye need only follow a short path.

Column Guides Guide rules that enable columns to be positioned accurately. They are not printed along with the rest of the page.

Copy To duplicate a selected object or group to the clipboard area for later use.

Cut To remove a selected object or group from a document and place it in a clipboard area for later use. See Paste.

Document A whole array of pages, referred to collectively.

DTP Abbreviation for desktop publishing. A system of electronic page makeup to fulfil a printed requirement.

Font A type style of characters, both letters, numbers and special symbols.

Frame An object that contains text and graphics. Different packages employ different methods of frame usage. Some need to have specific frames for text and graphics others remain unassigned until filled with either type.

Handles Small areas of a frame that enable it to be re-sized by dragging.

Hyphenation Splitting a word across two lines when there is not enough space for it to fit on one.

Kerning To adjust the space between two characters. Some software offers automatic kerning, others need manual adjustment.

Landscape The format of a page where the width is greater than the height. Compare with Portrait.

Leading The distance, in points, between the baseline of one line of text and the baseline of the one below.

Line Art Artwork made up using objects (lines, arcs, boxes and so on), each using its own code totally independent of other objects in the same image. Compare with Bitmap.

Margins Areas of the page that are left blank. Typically, these would be the top and bottom, and left and right hand sides. If the page is part of a folded document (magazine, newsletter and the like), the left and right hand pages will have larger margins on the left and right hand edges.

Monospacing Each character occupies the same amount of horizontal space. Compare with Proportional spacing.

OLE Abbreviation for Object Linking and Embedding. A method of transferring and sharing files between Windows applications.

Paragraph A line or lines of text separated by a Return marker at the beginning and the end.

Paste To reuse any object that was placed in the clipboard area using either the Cut or Copy commands.

Pica A typesetting measurement equal to 1/6 of an inch.

Point A typesetting measurement equal to 1/72 of an inch. Twelve points make one pica.

Point size The height of a font, measured in points.

Portrait A page format where the height is greater than the width. See Landscape.

Proportional Spacing A method of spacing characters according to their individual horizontal size. Compare with Monospacing.

Sans Serif A font without serifs. See Serif.

Serif A short line at the end of strokes in a font character. Serifs make following a line of small text easier.

Text Run-around Forcing text to avoid an object or the contents of a frame.

Typeface See Font.

WYSIWYG Abbreviation for What You See Is What You Get. The ability to display an accurate screen representation of what will be printed.

memory is installed. The table at the end of the reviews gives further details on each package.

The whole reason for desktop publishing is so that you can achieve quality printed material without having to go to the expense of using a High Street print shop or other commercial outlet. Therefore, the type of printer you have connected to your PC is very important.

Pages from a DTP package are usually printed as graphics, even though most of the page may be text. The reason for this is that although the printer may have its own built in fonts, they are unlikely to be scalable or match those used in the document. The exception here is the PostScript language, but more on that later.

So, the only way to obtain a *wysiwyg* printout is to download the page to the printer as a graphic image. The problem with this is that graphic print images eat memory and appear in different levels of quality depending on the printer you are using.

Try to avoid final printouts on a dot matrix – their output in the graphics department can vary so much with the most common problems being banding of the image and a slow and noisy printing.

Higher quality output

If you have no choice, try an use a 24-pin printer as these offer a much higher quality output when driven correctly. If you've access to an inkjet – or bubblejet as it's more commonly known, you'll experience a much clearer print quality. Simple machines such as the Cannon BJ10ex offer clean printouts and new models are far superior.

At the top of the scale is the laser printer. These units once cost the earth but many are now available for under £600 and are to be recommended. The problem here is memory. As I've already said, DTP pages are huge when printed and a laser is a full page print unit.

This means that the document must be formulated in the printer's own memory in its entirety before the page is output.

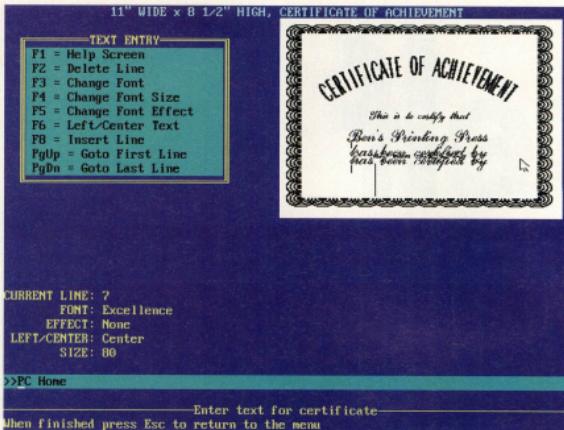
If the laser doesn't have enough memory, either nothing will happen, or more likely, half the image will appear on one page and the rest on another. You'll need a laser printer will at least 2Mb of ram to make it of any real use in a DTP environment.

PostScript

POSTSCRIPT is the language of printers and typesetters. It's not some weird form or tick-tack where Gary signals to John across the print room to say that that his coffee is ready – it's a computer language.

Devised by Adobe, it is a complete command set to tell printers and typesetters what to print and is the only effective way to get either film or bromide made from a DTP document. PostScript is a temperamental beast and is prone to failure, though, thankfully not very often.

Many laser printers can understand and interpret the PostScript language and formulate pages using it. This is a useful feature to consider when choosing a laser printer. It's also worth pointing out that there are some machines that emulate PostScript but are not always reliable.



Ben's Printing Press

Price: £57.58 (£49 ex VAT)

Supplier: LTS, Haydon House, Alcester Road, Studley, Warwickshire, B80 7AN

Telephone: 0386 792617

SOME programs give you a sense of *déjà vu* which is what happened when I loaded Ben's Printing Press (BPP). All of a sudden, I was sitting in front of my trusty Atari 800XL, printing letter heads with a program that was absolutely superb.

For those of you who have never heard of the 800XL, it was an 8-bit machine, launched in 1986. PrintShop was the package in question then, and it handled itself a damn sight better than BPP.

BPP is a Dos-only application that offers the ability to design and print rudimentary banners, business cards, posters, certificates, birthday cards and other cheap looking printed material using a variety of bit mapped graphics and fonts supplied.

Its user interface is menu driven and, while it does its job, it is not particularly friendly. On occasion, I even had the program crash out and return to the Dos prompt.

Material is designed by hauling along a predefined menu route. You first choose the type of document and then work through a series of menus, adding borders, graphics and text as you go.

Graphics can only be positioned in set areas of the document and these vary depending on the type of material you are designing.

Text can be overlaid anywhere on the page and there are no automatic sizing options to make a line of text fit a certain area.

As you progress through the menus, a visual of the page helps decide the next move. Everything produced with BPP is monochrome; you cannot colour text or graphics at any point.

One thing that's really annoying is that page sizes and orientations are described in physical size. For instance what you and I would call A4 is described as 11 x 8.5 or 8.5 x 11 depending whether it's portrait or landscape – it's not even metric.

If you ever find that your needs have grown, the software can be adapted by modifying the templates to encompass new document types. However, this is not via any form of editor supplied with Ben's Printing Press, you must create your own in a text editor using command scripts.

A final mention must go to the supplementary printer folder that's supplied as part of the package. This includes the tempting delights of coloured paper, mailing labels, parchment certificates and other paper-based printing examples.

BPP is barely adequate for the rank beginner who wants to produce various printed material and is only really an upgrade from a potato and knife. If you're after columns, text running around objects, colour and other features that form part of a real DTP package, look elsewhere.

At £57.58, it represents appalling value for money when you consider that 1st Press costs around the same and offers a great deal more.

Express Publisher for Dos

Price: £116.33 (£99 ex VAT)

Supplier: Spinnaker, 3 Baron's Gate, 33-35 Rothschild Road, Chiswick, London W4 5HT

Telephone: 081-742 7222

I ADMIRE companies who can produce similar software running under both Windows and Dos. Inevitably, the Dos version suffers from a lack of fonts and a standard user interface, but where Express Publisher is concerned, things kick off on a better footing.

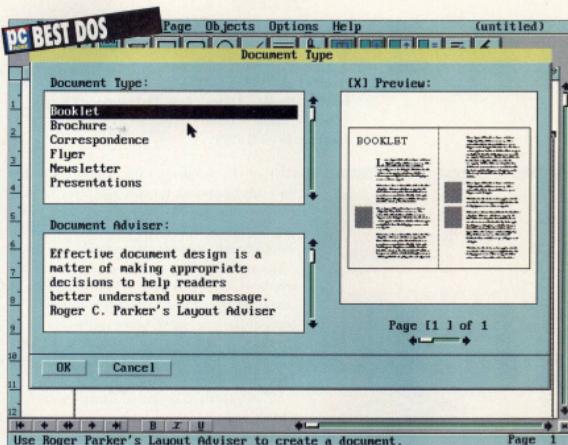
First up, Express Publisher is the best Dos-based DTP package I have seen. Although it is purely a monochrome system with no colour abilities whatsoever, its user interface is very easy to use and offers a number of facilities that are unmatched by any other Dos DTP system examined here. For starters, it's the only product to sport a spelling checker.

One useful feature for a novice designer or layout chappie is the built-in design expert. This offers bus loads of advice on a number of subjects from designing newsletters with many different slants to fax headers and letter heads.

What's more, you can have the system automatically open an *expertly designed* template and you've got a starting point. This feature is useful for the designer who's lost inspiration.

One other feature that cannot be found in any other Dos-based DTP package is automatic text wrapping. Express Publisher offers a facility to wrap text around graphic shapes within a graphics frame. This makes way for some very modern design work from a minimum of effort.

The software moves up a gear with special text effects. Fitting text to a curve is easy, as is creating star bursts, flashes and other shapes where text effects may



be used. Drop shadows are pretty standard, but Express Publisher also allows you to create other shadow effects. You can even add perspective to text.

I was very impressed with Express Publisher, even more than I was with its Windows counterpart as I would expect more from a Windows package.

To describe the 400-page manual as comprehensive is an understatement. Not only does it describe the use of the software in explicit detail, it also gives details of design techniques and even has a section devoted to common design and typographical mistakes. If you're a staunch Dos user who regards Windows as Satan, this package will ensure your faith for many moons to come.

An outstanding feature of Express Publisher is the expertly designed template – complete with document adviser

Arranging text to flow around the physical border of a picture, rather than around the picture box, is simple

Express Publisher for Windows

Price: £116.33 (£99 ex VAT)

Supplier: Spinnaker, 3 Baron's Gate, 33-35 Rothschild Road, Chiswick, London, W4 5HT.

Telephone: 081-742 7222



Non-standard keyboard short cuts mean Express Publisher for Windows

ONE of the problems with computers is that they are becoming increasingly easy to program. While this may not sound like a problem, if you think about standards, you realise that to stick to them may involve more work.

The result is that standards fly out of the window, or in this case Windows. There is absolutely no point to the vast numbers of companies writing Windows software to all choose a different way of interfacing the user. Unfortunately, this is what has happened with Express Publisher.

All my standard keyboard shortcuts such as Ctrl+X and Ctrl+V for cutting and pasting are void in this otherwise very good package. This is a real pain, as almost every other DTP, word-processor and drawing package on the PC and on other platforms use these standard key-

strokes.

Why the Power Up designers felt it necessary to change this, heaven only knows. The file selector boxes too are not standard Windows dialogs, neither is the help function.

After my initial rant, Express Publisher is a good example of a flexible DTP package. It supports a num-

ber of image file formats and, during installation, you can specify the text filers to include.

There is nothing particularly stunning about this package. It handles text reasonably well, though the style set up could have been better designed.

Colour can be added to the text and frames within the software. However, Express Publisher is another example of poor colour implementation as it only supports the RGB colour model. There is no scope for HSV, CMYK or Letraset Pantone.

Having found a really nice image of an F15, I decided to design a page using it as a backdrop. The result is visually pleasing, but getting a finished page was a little more awkward because of the slightly unconventional user interface.

Text wrapping can be neatly performed by drawing a polygon around the shape you want the text to conform to and it's pretty easy, but the whole affair was dogged by the software periodically refusing to completely update the screen, leaving vast chunks of text hidden. Forcing the screen to redraw (by moving a slider bar) caused the text to reappear – but not after the obligatory curse.

Incorporating a spelling checker, desktop toolbox and a number of other useful gadgets for the budding DTP'er, Express Publisher is a decent package. What makes it more desirable is the accompanying application, Text Appeal.

This allows you to create eye catching headlines and banners so you don't need to lash out on a copy of CorelDRAW or something similar. Although there are some real niggles with this software, it is still only version 1 and should be due for an update and bug fixes soon.

Avagio

Price: £70.44 (£59.95 ex VAT)

Supplier: LTS, Haydon House, Alcester Road, Studley, Warwickshire, B80 7AN

Telephone: 0386 792617

AVAGIO is another product imported from the US by LTS. After the romp down memory lane with BPP, the Avagio packaging looked as though it contained a more promising application. Sadly, though, first impressions can be deceptive.

First up, Avagio's biggest failing is that it is not a Windows package. Hence, you don't get the flexibility of TrueType fonts or a user interface that is standard.

Running under Dos, Avagio is painfully slow and cumbersome though some speed advantages can be had by running the software in EGA resolutions rather than VGA and, to be honest, I'd have said that my screen looked more like EGA anyway.

Still, I can't imagine that Avagio would be used for detailed colour work, so there's not much lost with EGA.

It is supplied with a number of fonts and clip art samples to get you started. These are OK, but not top

quality as you might expect from bundled bits. There's also a range of ready made templates for you to print out. These include forms for use in offices: Stationary such as fax headers, telephone message forms, invoices, calendars and other official material save the hassle of producing them yourself.

I found part of the documentation interesting: A separate sheet detailed some of the special effects that Avagio 2 could produce. Shadows on images, text run-around a shape, shading and inverse text are all possible. After reading the section on running text around a shape, it dawned on me that this was not a special effect at all but a description of a standard method of achieving the effect using any DTP type program.

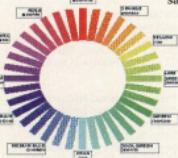
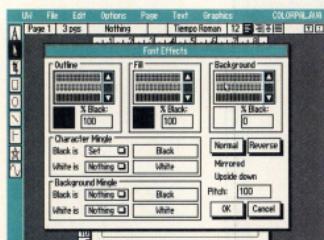
The user interface is pretty substandard. Anyone used to Windows or other systems where drop-down menus are used will naturally go to the file menu for all file operations, whether importing graphics or saving the document.

Avagio discards this standardisation and plumps for a system where you use the text and graphics menus respectively to import text and graphics – why?

I found Avagio to be wholly unimpressive in all areas. It's slow, awkward and non-standard. However, it isn't too expensive and compares with 1st Press for Dos in price but not performance.

However, I'd prefer to use a scalpel, a tin of carcinogenic Spray Mount and paste board and die of lung cancer rather than of brain damage from smashing my head repeatedly on the keyboard in frustration.

The colour wheel is one of Avagio's plus points – little else is of merit



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- 6a.1 Use simple mappings
- 7a.1 Solve a variety of linear and other inequalities

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- 5a.3 Understand co-ordinates in all four quadrants
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- 8a.1 Interpret graphs of the form $y = mx + c$
- 9a.1 Know the shape of graphs (eg. quadratic & cubic)

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- 3a.4 Recognise whole Nos. divided by 5 or 10
- 4a.1 Recognise terms which involve multiply and factor
- 5a.3 Understand terms like prime and square root
- 6a.1 Solve linear equations
- 8a.1 Manipulate algebraic equations

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- 3a.2 Egyptian number patterns
- 5a.1 Add to sequences
- 5a.4 Recognise patterns in equivalent fractions
- 7a.2 Symbols to express the rules of sequences
- 9a.2 Indices for negative and fractional values

Rib Tickler

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- Archimedes World (July '93)

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Maths (Number)

For Children 6 to 16 Years

This is a first rate set of games suitable for a wide range of ages and abilities. They are educationally worthwhile and exciting to play - a rare combination. They are highly recommended for both home and school use.

- Archimedes World (Dec. '92).

7a.10 of 10 is unique in home-based programs because of the National Curriculum link and it makes a good resource for parents as well as good educational fun for children

- The Micro User (Sept. '92)

ONLY £25.95



English

For Children 6 to 16 Years

With an elaborate system of colour-coded levels of achievement and multiple levels of difficulty, 10 out of 10 is a useful compilation of programs based on the current National Curriculum for English... The zappy delivery and range of activities is guaranteed to sustain the attention of even reluctant learners

- RISC User (Jan/Feb. '93)

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1st Press for Windows

Price: £58.69 (£49.95 ex VAT)

Supplier: GST, Meadow Lane, St. Ives, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE17 4LG

Telephone: 0480 496600

GST have a well known name in the DTP field. Some years ago, they started the budget ball rolling with TimeWorks DTP and have progressed ever since. One of their most recent offerings for the DTP fraternity is 1st Press, an easy-to-use package for beginners.

Available under Windows and Dos, 1st Press is an ideal package for the novice DTPer or for the user who has only occasional and undemanding use for such a package.

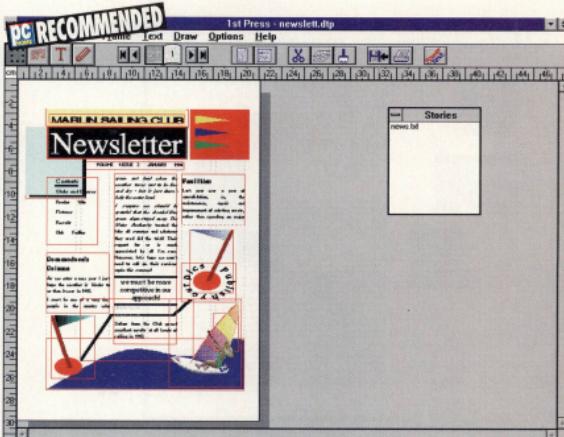
Your money buys a competent package that can import both bitmap and vector graphics in a number of formats including PCX, TIFF and EPS. It can also import files from GST's Designworks and 1st Design. Bitmap graphics can even be edited, although crudely, from within the application.

On the text front too, 1st Press offers support for a wide range of formats from standard Ascii, to Word for Windows, WordStar 5 and 6 and even Lotus Agenda. TrueType fonts are used under the Windows version but the Dos version is naturally more limited in font area.

Pages definitions can only be set up when opening a new document. Here you get the option to set the page size and orientation. Although A3 to A5, two fanfold and one organiser paper size is specified – it is not possible to define your own page specifications. This will not be a major limitation to begin with, but might cause problems if needs become greater.

Defining the number of columns can be achieved at any point in the document, and although careful thought is needed regarding gutters and margins, a mistake early on is not difficult to resolve. Even when you've set the number of columns, the software only prints guides and allows you to position frames anywhere.

The columns guides can be snapped to if required. Flowing text from one frame to another is also possible, and real time editing of text keeps the various columns



up to date with the changes. No separate window is available for editing text.

Paragraph styles can be assigned so that setting the type style of any particular chunk of text is but two mouse clicks away. The main reason for this, though, is to ensure that the document's text is uniformly set in the same typeface, style and size. You simply set up paragraph styles before you start working and everything will appear neat and tidy set.

One of the surprising features is PowerText. This allows you to fit text to curves, slant or mirror it, add a colour and more. The program also offers rudimentary drawing facilities for adding shapes and lines quickly without having to create them in another package first and then import them.

For a beginner's package, this offering has a lot of features and represents superb value for money. Although there are a few hang-ups, such as the inability to assign colour to boxes and poor zooming functions, 1st Press for Windows is suitably powerful for the needs of its intended market.

For a beginner's package, 1st Press for Windows has a lot to offer and represents superb value for money

1st Press for Dos

Price: £58.69 (£49.95 ex VAT)

Supplier: GST, Meadow Lane, St. Ives, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE17 4LG

Telephone: 0480 496600

HAVING marvelled at 1st Press for Windows, I joyfully installed the Dos version, expecting miracles. What I didn't expect was a display that looked almost the same as TimeWorks DTP. Surprised at this phenomena, I ploughed through the package to see what's new.

After a while, I discovered that there seemed to be very little difference between this DTP package and GST's original offering.

It's a competent DTP package that allows pages to be designed with a minimum of fuss, but offers few features for the more creative mind. Like other GST packages, 1st Press for Dos allows simple graphics to be added from within the program, but in monochrome only. The whole internal workings are monochrome

based, but like its Windows partner, allow the importation of coloured images from other sources.

Running outside Windows means that there is a more limited range of fonts. In fact, the package comes with just three. Register ownership of the product and you'll receive a further five fonts and a copy of GST's Typographica.

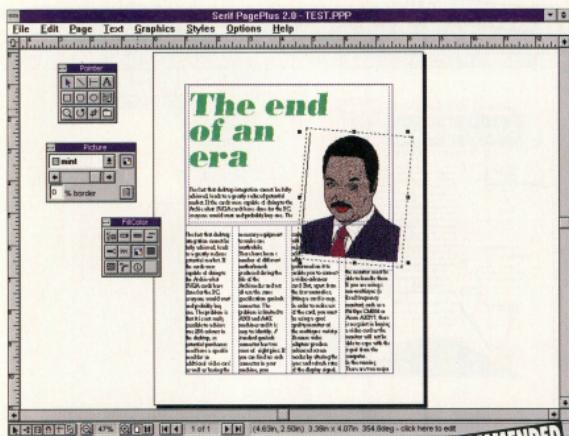
Unfortunately, this Dos version does not share the PowerText option with its Windows counterpart. This effectively limits you to monochrome text and removes the facility to produce fancy effects.

The user interface is one of the best I have seen in a Dos-based DTP package. It's fast, relatively easy to use and clear. Also, unlike some of the other Dos offerings examined in this feature, it supports VGA screen modes.

TimeWorks was always an impressive package for the money. Now under a different name and re-priced, it still represents good value. It's certainly one of the best Dos DTP packages I've seen so far, maybe not in terms of features, but certainly in its ease of use and speed.



1st Press for Dos is Timeworks with a new name but still one of the best Dos packages around



One of the slow parts of the Page Plus 2 is handling graphics. Rotated images particularly take a lot of time

Page Plus 2

PC RECOMMENDED

Price: £70.45 (£59.95 ex VAT)

Supplier: Serif Europe, PO Box 15, Nottingham, NG7 2DA

Telephone: 0602 421502

DESIGNING a document in Page Plus 2 isn't particularly easy if you're used to other DTP packages. It has a non-standard approach to many aspects and threw me for a good long while.

I can usually pick up any DTP package and get the rudiments of it in around 15 minutes, but Page Plus 2 was different. This is not to say that there is anything wrong with the software, quite the opposite, it just takes a little time to understand.

This Windows package, now in its second generation, is available in two forms: The application on its

PFS: First Publisher

Price: £69.33 (£59 ex VAT)

Supplier: Spinmoker, 3 Barron's Gate, 33-35 Rothschild's Road, Chiswick, London, W4 5HT.

Telephone: 081 742 7222



First Publisher's toolbox carries a number of ambiguous icons

WHILE perusing the box that carries PFS: First Publisher, I had a thought that it might not be up to much. After having already handed myself through Avagio, I couldn't face another Dos publishing effort.

The thick paper backed manual suggests it is a comprehensive package – it's not. To give you an idea how comprehensive it isn't, the install program offers the choice of hard disk or floppy.

The user interface, although employing drop-down menus, is amateurish and tacky. The type style used by the software (not for your documents) is hard on the eyes. Colour is also not in the domain of First Publisher – the only changes I could make was to the overall screen display (there are three colour options) and even selecting

own or bundled as a complete package comprising some 14 high density disks, three holding the program, the rest containing lots of clip art and fonts plus a further application to allow you to create stunning text effects such as mapping text to a curve.

The bumper bundle pack costs £117.45 (£99.95 ex VAT) whereas the additions, if bought separately, would cost £70.35. This is real value for money.

Once you've got the hang of Page Plus 2, it's plain sailing. Text objects can be easily defined and their styles changed. Graphics images can be imported in a number of formats and can also be manipulated with colour and tint options.

Editing and adding colours to the style list is easy. A colour cube allows you to get the required colour so that you can tweak it by adjusting the HSV or RGB values that make it up. Considering that four colour professional printing techniques use the CMYK model, I was surprised to see it missing in this package. However, it does support Letraset's Pantone colour catalogue.

Page Plus is not exactly fast on a machine with a modicum of memory. My 486SX with 4Mb of ram chugged on at a snail's pace, using the hard disk as virtual memory. On an 8Mb machine with similar specifications, the thing flew.

One of the slow parts of the program is handling graphics. Rotated images particularly take a lot of time as any manipulation of an image after rotation has taken place causes the machine to calculate the angle again rather than permanently modifying the image in memory. Other functions within the software, too, can be tediously slow unless you have the memory.

Page Plus 2 is one of the more impressive packages I've looked at. It has a great deal of scope but I'm not sure it can beat PressWorks in many areas. For starters, PW is a great deal faster on standard machines and also has a spelling checker and thesaurus.

Both packages have their strengths and weaknesses and you don't get oodles of fonts and over 500 clip art images from GST. That said, if you don't want fonts, Page Plus is a lot cheaper.

the grey option produced a red and green display. To say that I was unimpressed is an understatement.

The method of control is awful. A toolbox down the right side of the image carries a number of ambiguous icons, including one that looks very much like a tree. Being outside Windows, TrueType fonts are not used.

The software comes with just two full scalable fonts and a further 22 bitmap fonts available in predetermined sizes only. A number of clip art examples are supplied, but most of these are of poor quality, some being almost as bad as the images from BPP.

Thankfully, you can import images in TIF, PCX, MSP and PIC formats though the software tries to convert it to monochrome. What's really funny is the line *Importing High-Resolution art* when getting an external image and then seeing this chunky graphic that would repeat a Spectrum reviewer.

Although the manual shows a number of different documents in preparation, few are supplied on the

While I am sure that the software is capable of more than I have given it credit for here, I cannot see that anyone would actually want to use it – the screen display was enough to put me off. If a hardened DTP user feels this way, how will a novice take it?



PressWorks is a Windows application that offers all the features of 1st Press plus a whole lot more

PressWorks

pc BEST WINDOWS

Price: £116.33 (£99 ex VAT)

Supplier: GST, Meadow Lane, St. Ives, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE17 4LG

Telephone: 0480 496600

GST's bid for a slice of the semi-professional DTP market comes in the form of PressWorks.

This is a Windows application that offers all the features of its small brother, 1st Press, plus a whole lot more.

For starters, it's a colour DTP system, enabling you to define text colours and fill patterns with ease. The Power Text feature mentioned in the 1st Press review is present as is the ability to add a tint to any frame and/or its border.

What's really nice to see are varying levels of transparency on offer, a feature that some professional packages find hard to match.

What's disappointing, though, is the inability to select a true colour from a CMYK model – you're stuck with choosing colours from a set range.

Another really neat feature, and, again, unexpected in a package of this price, is the ability to define an area of a frame to run the text around. This enables you to run columns of text smoothly around features in an image, rather than having a very boxy, slab-like feel to the page design.

PressWorks also allows you to define templates for commonly used documents. This saves the trouble of

Features at a glance

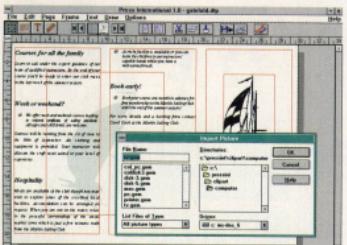
	Price (inc VAT)	Dos	Windows	Text formats	Graphic formats	Spell checker	Thesaurus	Colour/Models
1st Press Dos	£49.95	Yes	No	Word, WordPerfect, Microsoft Works, Windows Write, WordStar, 1st Word Plus, Ascii	.RTF, PIC, PCK, TIF, LBM, GEM, IMG, EPS, SLD, WMF, BMP, CGM	No	No	None
1st Press Windows	£49.95	No	Yes	Word, WordPerfect, Microsoft Works, Windows Write, WordStar, 1st Word Plus, Ascii	.RTF, PIC, PCK, TIF, LBM, GEM, IMG, EPS, SLD, WMF, BMP, CGM	No	No	None
Avagio 2.0	£59	Yes	No	Word, WordPerfect, Multimate, WordStar, Ascii	PCX, TIF, EPS, PS, UWI	No	No	RGB
Ben's Printing Press	£49.95	Yes	No	N/A	PCX	No	No	None
Express Publisher for Dos	£99	Yes	No	Word, WordPerfect, Lotus AMI, SPC Pro. Write, Lotus 123, WordStar, Ascii	TIF, BMP, DRW, WMF, PCX, CGM, EPS	Yes	No	None
Express Publisher for Windows	£99	No	Yes	Word, WordPerfect, Lotus AMI, SPC Pro. Write, Lotus 123, WordStar, Ascii	TIF, BMP, DRW, WMF, PCX, CGM, EPS	Yes	No	RGB
PageMaker 5	£695	No	Yes	Word, WordPerfect, Ascii, PageMaker stories + many spreadsheet and database generic formats	TIF, BMP, EPS, DRW, WMF, OLE	Yes	No	RGB, CMYK, Pantone, Toyo, NaniNippon, Colorecurve, Truematch
PagePlus 2	£59	No	Yes	Word, WordPerfect, WordStar, Ascii	TIF, PCX, EPS, OLE, WMF	No	No	RGB, HSV, Pantone
PFS: First Publisher	£59	Yes	No	Word, PFS: Write/Choice, Multimate, WordPerfect, WordStar, Professional Write, Ascii	PCX, MSP, TIF, PIC	No	No	None
Press Works	£99	No	Yes	Word, WordPerfect, Microsoft Works, Windows Write, WordStar, 1st Word Plus, Ascii	.RTFBMP, TIF, WMF, PCX, GIF, CGM, GEM, IMG, EPS, SLD, PIC, OLE	Yes	Yes	Yes, no particular model
QuarkXPress 3.12	£895	No	Yes	Word, Write, Ami Pro, .RTF, XyWrite III, Ascii	CGM, PLT, CT, RLE, DRW, TIF, GIF, BMP, PCX, WMF, PCT, EPS, AI	Yes	No	CMYK, HSB, RGB, Pantone, Truematch, Focoltone

designing the master page each time you design a new document of the same ilk as a previous one. Other features that make it stand out from the crowd include a full spelling checker and thesaurus.

Like most programs today, PressWorks employs a push button method of control that makes operating it very easy. Some of the icons are a little ambiguous, but once you've discovered their purpose, you'll not forget again.

PressWorks is a package that would be on my shopping list if I wanted to get into DTP at a semi-professional level.

It is supplied with a number of fonts and clip art examples and is ready to run. Full marks to GST for another winning package.



PressWorks is feature packed – it even has a spell checker & a thesaurus

Minimum requirements	Comments	Value/10
286, 2Mb, hard disk, Dos 3 or higher, EGA or better	Reworked version of Timeworks. Competent and easy to use. Novice's package	8
286, 2Mb, hard disk, Windows 3.1, EGA or better	Much better than the Dos version. Novice's package. Recommended	9
286, 640k, mouse, Dos 3 or above, hard disk	Poor quality DTP. Tediously slow. Barge poll job	4
520k, hard disk	Avoid this one	1
286, 2Mb, hard disk, EGA or higher, Dos 3.3 or above	Clever package, slightly unconventional. Suitable for novice to intermediate	8
286, 2Mb, hard disk, EGA or higher, Windows 3 or above	Similar to Windows version. Competent and easy to use. Best Dos. Recommended	9
Call Aldus	Professional package. Tends to learn more towards text manipulation	8
286, 2Mb, hard disk, EGA or better, Windows 3.1	Superb package. Easy to use. Recommended	9
XT, 640k, two floppy	Very poor Dos application. Slow, very limited	4
286, 2Mb, hard disk, EGA, Windows 3.1	Brilliant software from GST. Offers a great deal. Best buy	10
Call Quark	Top quality professional package. Brilliant with graphics	9

Serious money options

PageMaker 5.0

Price: £816.63 (£695 ex VAT)

Supplier: Aldus Europe, Aldus House, West One Business Park, 5 Mid New Cottins, Edinburgh, Scotland, EH11 4DU

Telephone: 031 453 2211

PAGEMAKER is one of the longest serving DTP applications in existence. Like QuarkXPress, it is a professional package with a great many abilities and advantages, but it cannot come close to offering its image manipulation functions.

The areas in which PageMaker excels are more in the text line rather than graphics. For starters, PageMaker has a built-in wordprocessor mode that takes you out of the DTP environment to add and edit text without having to wait for the text columns to repeatedly update as you type.

The application also boasts automatic kerning, an interruptible screen update so that you don't have to wait until it finishes redrawing and a host of other features that are not currently available under QuarkXPress.

One of PageMaker's biggest assets at this time is its connectability: Documents can be ported from the Macintosh to the PC and visa versa. For scanner users, it also supports the TWAIN standard devised by Aldus, Hewlett-Packard and other industry partners. The TWAIN system allows images to be scanned directly into the page.

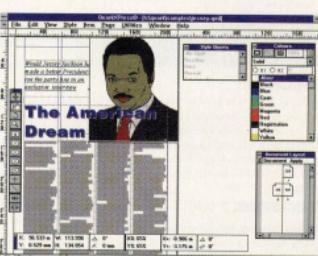
Greater flexibility can be achieved by writing scripts for PageMaker. These can be likened to macros and can automate common tasks within the software.

While PM has a number of features over QuarkXPress, I am not convinced that either is a better package. Both concentrate their power in different areas, PM in its text handling and interconnectability, Quark in its stunning range of image manipulation and text flow. In general, PageMaker is for the DTP user whereas Quark is a package for a designer.

QuarkXPress 3.1

Price: £1051.63 (£895 ex VAT)

Supplier: Computers Unlimited, 2 Business Centre, Colindale Lane, Colindale, London, NW9 6DU
Tel: 081-200 8282



IT IS only recently that the top publishing package for the Mac has appeared on PC screens and confirms the fact that the PC is a viable alternative to Apple's stronghold market. Quark is a professional package for professional needs and only the rich eccentric home user would consider such a purchase.

The question with Quark is not whether it can do something, rather whether PageMaker 5 can do it better

and this forms a long and hard fought battle between PM and Quark. When it boils down to it, the programs have major differences and a number of strengths and weaknesses in many areas.

QuarkXPress is a hugely powerful package designed to handle multiple page documents in full colour, supporting many image file formats. Once in Quark, images can be altered by adjusting the colour content, saturation, contrast, posturisation and so on.

This makes creative page design a doddle and reduces the need for other software packages, though if you can afford Quark, you should also invest in a quality image manipulation package.

Mastering the use of Quark is not the easiest thing as there is just so much to it. But, once you've grasped the basics, it is incredibly easy to use for simple or ridiculously complex documents.



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Microsoft Publisher v2.0

MICROSOFT Publisher is a powerful desktop publishing tool from Microsoft. It allows you to create posters, newspapers, memorandums and many more documents with the only limitation being your own inspiration and keen eye.

Containing nine tools it allows you to perform a great variety of tasks as if you were using a larger DTP program – without its complexity.

With a good range of pre-defined templates to

choose from it won't be long before you're producing new and eye-catching posters, newsletters and displays.

The most powerful of these tools is the PageWizard. It allows you to create a full page layout with a few clicks of a mouse button using predetermined templates. All you have to do is supply the program with relevant text and information to insert at several points.

THE first time you load Microsoft Publisher you will be presented with an introduction to the program. To view this use the left and right arrows towards the bottom of the window. It would be a good idea to read this as it points out some key features of the program. To leave this, click Done.

When you have left the introduction you will be greeted with a message – click OK to bypass this. A new window will appear called *Create New Publication*. Here it is possible to use one of the predefined templates supplied with the program or create your own.

Designing a page Publisher is rather like designing a page on a piece of paper except you are allowed greater manipulation of how pictures and text can interact with each other and their surroundings.

They must each have their own frame or box that may be resized and moved in many ways to fit to the style of the page to create the visual effect of a newspaper or magazine.

Installing Publisher

Requirements: Any PC running Windows 3.1

Directory installed to: C:\MSPUB

To run, double click on the MS Pub icon

TO install the program, load Windows and insert the Megadisk into the drive. From the Program Manager select File, Run and type:

as:setup

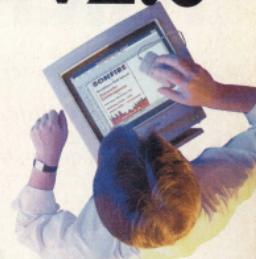
After a short while you will be asked whether you wish to carry on. Click Continue and you will be asked to select a directory to install the program to. Click Continue to choose the directory suggested, alternatively you may change it.

The program will begin to install from the Megadisk to your hard disk. After a short while you will be prompted to change disks – do so and click Continue.

Installation will eventually finish with the Program Manager appearing and a new program group called MS Pub 2.0 Demo created by the Setup program.

Inside this is the Publisher icon to load the program and also a Read Me file to tell you about the limitations of the program.

To load, double click on the Microsoft Publisher Demo icon.



You've read what desktop publishing is all about. Here's an opportunity to try it for yourself with Microsoft Publisher from PC Home's cover disks

Publishing tools

NINE basic tools are available in the program – not including the standard pointer – and these are found to the left of the screen. From top to bottom these are:

Text Frame Tool: Used to enter text into a box. Unlike a wordprocessor text must be entered inside a frame

Table Frame Tool: Use this when you have text that needs to be organised into rows and columns

Word Art Frame Tool: Allows the creation of fancy text which may be curved, slanted, stretched or even upside down

Picture Frame Tool: Pictures must also be placed in a frame. This allows manipulation of their position

PageWizard Tool: A special design assistant. Just select this tool, choose what you want to create, then mark the area for its whereabouts

Other Tools: The remaining tools are used to create lines, rectangles, ovals, arrows and other such shapes.

Each of these tools is activated by depressing its associated icon. For example, should you wish to input some text on to the page, just click on the Text Frame Tool and move the cursor to the top left hand corner where you wish to place the text.

Click and hold the mouse button, dragging the frame to the bottom right where you wish the text to end then release it. It does not matter if this box is not big enough as its size may be increased at a later stage.

Hold the pointer in the middle of the new box and click. The text instruments will appear at the top of the screen and a small cursor will appear inside the box. You may now enter text just like in a standard wordprocessor.

A box may be re-sized by clicking on it so that a border appears. Move the pointer to this border so that it turns into a small Resize icon. Click and hold the mouse button and move the edge of the box to the required new position.

To move the box place the pointer so that a small van appears. Just like before click and hold the button and move the box to its required position

Publisher Demo

BECAUSE this is a special test drive version of Microsoft Publisher, designed to let you try out all the tools and get a feel for the way it makes DTP easy before you spend your money on the full product, there are a few restrictions.

Files cannot be saved, and only one page may be designed at a time. Finally, when printing out, the word DEMO appears on the page.

Microsoft Publisher

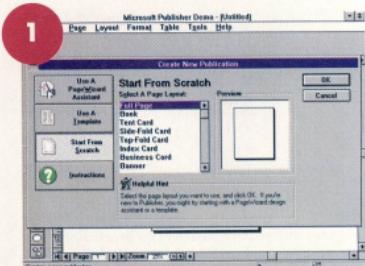
We designed a poster for an imaginary school fireworks display using a little colour and some flame effects.

Enjoy this step-by-step guide to how it was done



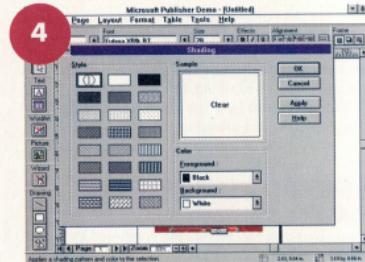
This is what the poster looked like, complete with exploding fireworks and a flame effect. Notice that the flames run through the lettering of the word BONFIRE as well as at the bottom. This was done using Microsoft Windows Paintbrush. For more details on how to use this handy graphics package, see our tutorial on Page 67

Helpful hint: At the start you have the option of having cue cards appear to help. The package is faster to use with this option disabled. It can be recalled from the help menu at any time, but no help is available on the demo version



For this example, we started with a clean page. Select New Document and then choose the Start From Scratch option. This will present you with a representation of a blank A4 sheet

Helpful hint: Plan the poster on paper before you start. It does not have to be exact – especially if you have poor drawing skills – but it may save a lot of time later on



To create the see-through text behind the graphic, open a text box and select a light colour – not white. Type in the text and position the box. Right click on the picture box and select Send Back to From the Layout menu. From the Format option, select Shading and make the text box clear. Highlight the words and change the colour to white

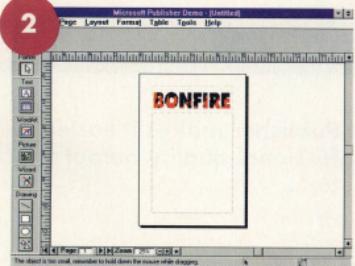
Helpful hint: Using a colour other than white will make sure that the positioning is correct and there are no spelling mistakes



The text box containing the word School still has to be changed into a clear one so the graphic can't be seen clearly. Make sure you change all the text boxes if the graphic fits behind more than one

Helpful hint: Don't forget to use the zoom control at the bottom of the screen to check on fine detail

2.0 Tutorial



2

As mentioned previously, we created the flame effect using Paintbrush for both the lettering and the picture at the bottom of the page. Select the Picture icon and then choose Import Picture from the File menu. You are presented with the option to make the picture fit the frame or vice versa and then the picture is placed in position

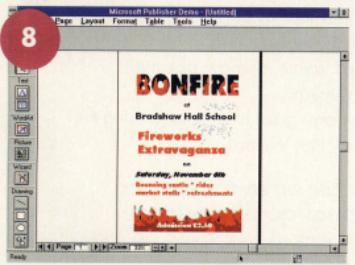
Helpful hint: Save your pictures as Bitmap (.BMP) files. These can be resized easily and give a good effect



5

All the text is now in place and your graphics are looking good, but there's something missing. Maybe a few fireworks would help? Back to Paintbrush and create a few simple explosion-type graphics. We used just the one but there's no reason you shouldn't make a few different ones. Don't be too creative, though, they're going to be obscured by text!

Helpful hint: The explosions are easy to create using basic tools from an art package. Repeating the same one can be just as effective as creating many different pictures



8

A quick preview. Removing the box lines using Hide Boundaries and Guides from the Tools menu reveals that the graphic still hasn't been corrected. A clear screen can show a lot more than when the guides clutter it although these are essential for positioning

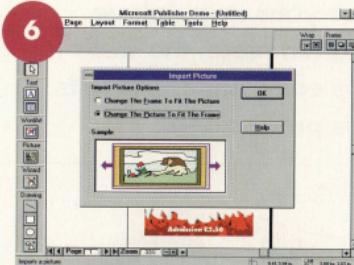
Helpful hint: Many keyboard shortcuts are available. For example, Ctrl-O will toggle the Boundary and Guide display



3

Proceed with the rest of the text until you reach the bottom of the page. You may need to resize some of the text to make the poster look good and fit the page. This is why it is important to plan the page before you start

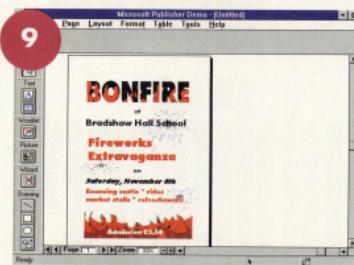
Helpful hint: Text colour can be changed using the Character option from the format menu. We'll use this for the bottom text, too



6

Create a picture frame and import the fireworks, positioning them where you want them. Size the frame and choose the second option from the import menu to ensure that the right effect is achieved. Then using the same technique described for the white letters, place the explosions behind the text

Helpful hint: Get the picture frame where you want it before using Send To Back. With large text frames filling the window, you could have to move them to get back to the image for editing



9

The finished article. All the graphics are in the right place and the admission cost is visible through the flames. A job well done. Mind you, don't be too good, or you'll be doing all future school posters and maybe the ones at work, too!

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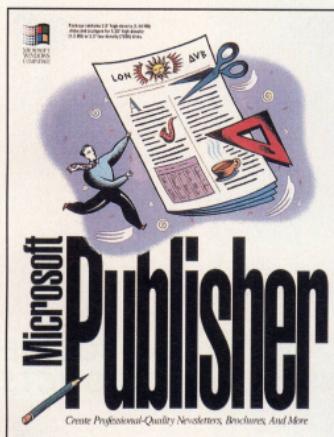
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Imagination unbound

SCANNERS are one of the most useful peripherals after printers and they have a wide variety of uses. If you need graphics on your PC there are just three ways of providing them: Draw them yourself, dip into a clip art collection or scan them.

If your artistic abilities are limited and you don't like the restriction of a standard clip art library in which many of the images may be unsuitable, scanning is the best option.

THERE are many uses for scanned material. For instance, if you produce newsletters with a desktop publishing package you can easily incorporate pictures by snapping them with a 35mm camera, getting the pictures developed, then scanning them into your PC.

Packages such as GST's Timeworks or Microsoft Publisher on this month's MegaDisk already have clip art, but using your own scanned images of people or places in a newsletter will add a personal touch. If you run a business from home you could scan in a logo and use it as a letterhead.

Many databases will now accept graphic images as part of a normal record and this opens up many possibilities for enhancing stored information. If you collect stamps, postcards, china, rabbits, motorcycles or whatever, take a photo, scan it in and include it in the database.

Character recognition

Many scanners are now supplied with OCR (optical character recognition) software. This enables you to scan a page of printed text and turn it into an Ascii text file on disk. This file can then be loaded into any word-processor and edited, printed out or whatever is required.

OCR can't yet cope with hand-written notes – even I sometimes can't read what I've written – but you stand a good chance of being able to input most printed material. It might be a restaurant menu, a spare parts list, a typed letter and so on. The accuracy can be almost 100 per cent and the savings in typing and time are tremendous.

Scanners have been steadily falling in price, yet improving in quality over the past few years. A basic monochrome hand scanner now retails for less than £100, so it can be as cheap scanning your own graphics as buying a couple of clip art collections.

If you want colour, of course, it will cost a bit more, but even the best colour models are now well under £500.



Hand held or flatbed?

THERE are two basic types of scanner: Hand held and flatbed. The best are flatbed and they will normally allow you to place an A4 sheet of paper on the scanner and scan it in one pass. The quality is usually excellent.

At the budget end of the market are hand held models. The scanning area is limited to a narrow strip about four or five inches wide and the scanner is dragged across the page.

If the scanned image is wider than this you will have to try to stitch together two strips of scanned image, which isn't easy.

An essential tool for the DTP enthusiast is the scanner. Roland Waddilove puts six inexpensive models to the test

Also, unless great care is taken when dragging the scanner down the page, the image may be skewed.

Drag it too fast, and either the computer or the scanner may not be able to keep up, resulting in lost data and a ruined image.

It might sound like hand held scanners are more trouble than they are worth, but it's not all that difficult to produce excellent images of small printed images.

In this review I'll be looking at six popular models, ranging from inexpensive monochrome to full colour.

Scanman 256



WHEN you think of hand scanners, the Logitech name automatically springs to mind. This 256 grey scale model is just about the best you can buy, although the package as a whole lacks some of the extras bundled with

the other models.

The large interface looks complicated and has a bank of eight dip switches. Fortunately none needed altering.

The Windows installation of the software went equally smoothly as all the default settings were perfect.

On the scanner is a switch for setting the range of grey shades from 2 to 256, another for setting the resolution from 100 to 400dpi and a lighten/darken wheel. The scans produced are excellent and better than, say, the Genius or Mustek.

The software has a reasonably good range of editing facilities, including sharpen, smooth, negative image and frames for your picture, but it could have been easier to use. The Scanman bundle as a whole, however, lacks an OCR facility – that would have made it outstanding.



Using Logitech's Scanman colour in mono mode to scan an image

How do scanners work?

INSIDE every scanner is a fluorescent lamp, which shines on to the paper as it is scanned. The scanner uses charged coupled devices (CCDs) to measure the intensity of the light reflected off the page. This might be stored in a single bit of a byte. A bit can be zero or one indicating the pixel is either black or white, which is fine for line art or OCR work.

The better scanners will measure a greater range of light intensity and will use four or eight bits. Eight bits, or one byte, can hold up to 256 values indicating 256 shades of grey. Colour scanners not only measure the intensity of the light, but also the colour components. The red,

green and blue components may be stored in four or even eight bits each.

RGB (red, green and blue) 24-bit colour is the best you'll get and is able to handle over 16 million colours. The scanners, however, tend to be expensive and cheaper models might use four or six bits per colour, totalling 4,096 or 262,144 colours.

The resolution of a scanner is measured in the number of dots per inch it can detect. They usually range from 100 to 400 dpi. To measure each dot the scanner needs a separate CCD image sensor, so to scan a strip four inches wide at 400 dpi the scanner needs a row of 4 x 400 or 1,600 CCDs.

Scanman Color



THE Scanman Colour is pretty unusual for a hand scanner – it can scan at resolutions up to 400dpi and in 24-bit colour – that's a total of 16.7 million colours. Not only that, it can also scan in 256 grey shades.

The interface is larger than usual and must be placed in a 16-bit expansion socket. The hand scanner is also slightly bigger than the other models, but has fewer controls – just a resolution switch and darken/lighten wheel.

The Windows FotoTouch software is easily installed and is quite powerful, more so than the mono version of FotoTouch supplied with the mono Scanman. Not only do you get the standard image manipulation tools, such as sharpen, smooth, flip, rotate and so on, but also painting tools such as gradient fills and different size and shape paint brushes.

The quality of the scanned images is excellent. As you would expect, the colour and resolution are good for a scanner in this price range and you probably won't find anything better until you double the price.



The quality from the Scanman Color is excellent



The finished Scanman mono scan using 256 grey shades =

Mustek CG-6000

I WAS initially worried by the small amount of documentation for this ColorArtist scanner, but it turned out to be so simple to use I didn't really need any. The hardware consists of a tiny plug-in board which requires a 16-bit expansion socket, and the hand scanner itself.

The installation utility for the software is superb and all the default settings worked perfectly first time. The scanner was up and running within five minutes.

Several scanning modes are available, from 50 to 200 dpi (dots per inch), from 64 shades of grey to over 250,000 colours. To select a mode you first set three switches on the scanner and then select the same setup in a dialog box in the Mustek Scankit utility. The only annoying feature was the long warm up time before each scan. Bundled with the CG-6000 was a good OCR program. The accuracy seemed very high and few mistakes were made with good quality original copy. Also included was a limited edition of Picture Publisher which was able to scan directly and then manipulate the image in various ways using its special effects tools.

Mustek GS-800

OTHERWISE known as the GrayArtist, this hand scanner features 256 grey scales and resolutions up to 800 dpi. The interface is tiny and appeared to be identical to the ColorArtist CG-6000. That was lucky because the one supplied stopped the PC from booting but it worked perfectly using the CG-6000's interface.

The scanner has a start button, resolution selector switch, darken/lighten wheel and scan mode switch. Installing the hardware was simply a matter of plugging it in and the software setup was through Windows.

It's surprising what a difference the number of grey shades makes and this 256-greyscale model produced far better scans than the Mustek CG-6000 in 64-greyscale mode. Line art and text can be scanned at up to 800 dpi.

Apart from the Windows-based Mustek Scankit utility software, there were two other Windows programs. Perceive OCR turns scanned text into text files and the accuracy is high with good quality original material.

Micrografx Picture Publisher is the other package, and this is excellent for adding a range of special effects, smoothing and so on. Overall, it's a nice package.

Genius B105A



THIS mono hand scanner features 256 grey shades at resolutions of up to 400 dpi. The resolution is easily adjustable using a switch on the scanner. Other switches set either text or photograph modes and

grey/black and white.

The small 16-bit interface will plug into any suitable expansion socket and I was pleased to see that sensible default I/O address and IRQ settings had been chosen. I simply plugged everything in, ran the Windows installation program and was scanning within just a few minutes of opening the box.

The quality of the scans is pretty good, though not quite as good as the Mustek or Scanman. The freebie software bundled with the Genius includes iPhoto Deluxe, which offers some good image manipulation tools, such as blur and sharpen and so on. It can also cut and paste and has simple drawing tools.

GO-CR is a reasonably good OCR package that worked well and was easy to use. The accuracy was fine.

Genius C105



I WAS least happy using the Genius C105 colour hand scanner. The reason is that in colour mode it can only scan in 4,096 colours at a resolution of 200 dpi, and in mono mode you are limited to line art in black or white, with no shades of grey.

It's not a particularly good colour scanner, neither is it a good mono one.

It looks impressive, though, largely due to the push-button controls on the top for setting the dither pattern and the LED display of the current resolution. The small 16-bit interface was easy to install, but when installing the software you need to remember what the dpi switch settings are. The scanner was soon up and running and no problems were experienced.

Bundled with the Genius C105 is iPhoto Deluxe, the image manipulation software provided with the other Genius model, and GO-CR, the same OCR package. Both programs are easy to use, have a good range of facilities and work well. ■

Conclusion

WHICH would I buy? The highest quality scans – mono or colour – were produced using the Logitech Scanmans.

Although they might seem expensive, shop around for discounted models. If OCR appeals, the Mustek GS-800 is a good grey scale scanner with useful free OCR software – you'd have to pay extra with the Scanman.

Specifications at a glance

	Mustek CG-6000	Mustek GS-800	Genius B105A	Scanman 256	Scanman Color	Genius C105
Price	£305.50	£146.88	£121.03	£292.58	£527.58	£256.15
Supplier	Swift Tech	Swift Tech	Watford Electronics	MD Office Supplies	MD Office Supplies	Watford Electronics
Telephone	0480 433100	0480 433100	0582 745555	0689 861400	0689 861400	0582 745555
Colour scans	200dpi/250,000 colours	No	No	No	400dpi/16m colours	200dpi/4,096 colours
Mono scans	400dpi/64 grey s	400dpi/256 grey s	400dpi/256 greys	400dpi/256 greys	400dpi/256 greys	400dpi
Freebies	Picture Publisher	Picture Publisher	iPhoto Deluxe	FotoTouch	FotoTouch Color	iPhoto Deluxe
	Perceive OCR	Perceive OCR	GO-CR			GO-CR
Scankit	Scankit	Scankit				
Score (max 5)	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★

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KNITWARE SWEATER DESIGN assists hand and machine knitters in custom designing sweaters and prints the pattern instructions to knit from. GCA, Oct Matrix Print.

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Richard Williams tries out a budget-priced LED printer and compares its performance with that of two similarly priced lasers

Light wars

PERSONAL Page Printer has become the generic term for the smaller, less expensive models that some still call budget lasers. To use the latter term generically is to ignore the fact that LED tech-

nology is now competing with the lasers, and certainly succeeding as far as price is concerned.

But how does LED technology work, and does it produce results as good as those from lasers?

VISUALLY, from the outside, at least, there's no difference between an LED printer and a laser, apart from the respective manufacturers' preferences for styling, positioning of control panels and other such minor details.

So while I had the three printers featured here on test, most people who saw them assumed I was testing three lasers.

What they didn't know was that inside one of them – the Oki OL 400e – instead of the usual laser beam technology, there was an array of microscopic LEDs achieving the same objective.

LED technology, when employed in printers, means fewer moving parts. Manufacturers can therefore make them more cheaply.

That's the simple logic behind the fact that the Oki is the least expensive of the three machines tested here – the other two being the Hewlett-Packard LaserJet 4L and the Star LS-5. All, incidentally, are 300 dots per inch (dpi) resolution machines.

But how do the printed results from the Oki compare? There were one or two surprises in this comparative test of three of the leading contenders for the title of Best Budget Personal Page Printer.

However, there a few matters we need to get straight here and now before you run away with the idea that an economy laser or LED printer is the answer to all your dreams. First off, excellent value for money though most of them are, they are generally slower and have

fewer features than their big brothers and sisters.

The standard memory provided with this type of machine is usually either 512k or 1Mb. It may sound a lot to dot matrix users who get by with as little as 8k or even 4k, but lasers and LEDs use a full-page display language which means the whole page has to be created in memory before it prints.

Full-page graphics and complex DTP pages often require 2Mb or more if they are to be printed as a single



It's all in the array

BOTH lasers and LED printers make use of a replaceable drum. Any part of the drum which is exposed to light becomes electrically charged, and attracts the toner – the black powder that forms the image on the paper – to it. The toner transfers to the paper as it passes through, and is heated to permanently fix it to the paper.

The fundamental difference between lasers and LED printers is in the way light is made to hit the drum at precisely the points it needs to in order to produce sharp text or graphics.

Lasers use a single laser beam reflected off an eight-sided mirror which rotates at high speed. The light scans over the drum surface drawing the required pattern. LED printers use a fixed array of microscopic LEDs – each small enough to produce a single dot of the 300 dpi resolution which is the norm for both laser and LED printers.

Despite the incredibly small size of the LEDs used, the approach is much simpler than that of the lasers and, as you can imagine, there are fewer moving parts, which makes an LED printer cheaper to manufacture.

job. Otherwise, only part of the image is printed, or it's output in two parts, on separate sheets, which is hardly of much use to most of us. Make sure you have enough memory for your needs, and add in this extra cost when you do the sums.

Having said that, Hewlett-Packard's LaserJet 4L does have Memory Enhancement technology which H-P claim solves the problem by effectively doubling the standard 1Mb.

Secondly, be sure to check the cost of replacement toner and drum cartridges. Prices can vary enormously and if you do a lot of printing, it all adds up.

Of course, toner cartridges can be recycled – several companies allow quite a good discount when you trade in your old one. But do bear in mind that page printers are fussy about the quality of toner you put into them, and that manufacturers generally recommend you stick to brand new cartridges.

It is certainly inadvisable to attempt any kind of recycling on a DIY basis – you could damage the machine and, worse, put yourself as at risk as all toner, and particularly the extra-fine variety, can get through your skin and is carcinogenic.

Cost effective

Two of the machines on test here have combined toner/drum cartridges, which means that when the toner runs out, you have to replace the drum as well, even though the latter may have more life left in it.

It appeared the Oki OL 400e had the advantage with its separate toner and drum cartridges, until I discovered the recommended price of a new drum cartridge was £145! But then, the drum is reckoned to be good for 20,000 pages – another benefit of the LED technology – so in this particular instance there's little or no cost difference at the end of the day.

Another point to watch is the type of emulations the printer is capable of, if any. Non-Windows users who want to run their printer from existing software should check that they have, or can obtain, a driver that's compatible with the machine.

Several printers do emulations that make them compatible with popular drivers, like the Epson FX80 and the HP LaserJet II.

Windows users, with True Type fonts which are downloaded to the printer, should have no problems. One of the drivers that come with Windows will most likely suit, and two of the machines reviewed here – the HP and the Star are – come with drivers and installation programs specially for the Windows environment.

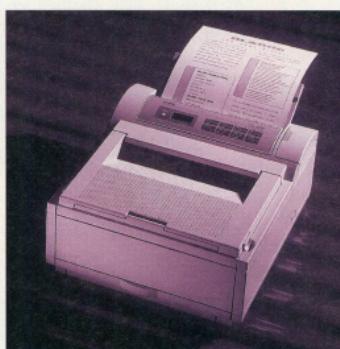
In fact, H-P provide an excellent Explorer pack with the 4L which, apart from drivers, includes memory resident status monitor and remote control panel, and a Travel Guide which helps you explore your new printing world.

In the post

And lastly before we get on to the reviews, if you want to make use of the sophisticated PostScript language which will give you greater flexibility than the PCL (Printer Command Language) which these types of printer employ, then you're out of luck so far as the H-P and the Star are concerned. Neither is capable of handling PostScript – there isn't even an option to upgrade by means of a card.

The Oki, however, despite its minuscule appearance, offers a future upgrade in this direction, as detailed in the review.

Oki OL 400e



Oki's budget-priced all-rounder, the 400e, uses LED technology to achieve its excellent output

THIS is the smallest overall and, in many ways, potentially the most versatile of the trio. It's the only one of the three using LED, as opposed to laser beam, technology. The print quality as far as text is concerned is every bit as good as the Star, though noticeably more ragged compared to the HP, and its graphics capability is excellent.

In its basic form, the Oki has 42 bitmapped fonts, many of which are weight and style variations of the same faces, the latter being Courier, Swiss, Dutch and

Line Printer. One area where this petite, pretty little printer scores is in its extra font options. A very neat font card slot with a hinged cover is provided, to the right of the control panel, to take any one of a range of 7 JEIDA cards covering most needs.

The really big news, however, is that Oki plan to make a PostScript level 2 card available for the 400e at the end of this year, as a simple user-installed upgrade.

Not only that, but Oki product manager Steve Hodgson says the PostScript card will include Appletalk, so that PC users who happen to have a

HP LaserJet 4L



Simplicity of control and excellent text output were hallmarks of the H-P LaserJet 4L

THE baby of the LaserJet range, although slower than its bigger sisters with 4ppm output, has complete H-P LaserJet functionality and compatibility. It has 26 scalable fonts which, with the enhanced PCL 5 printer language, in effect, allows you to create thousands of different fonts.

It's an attractive and compact machine, useful for the home or business user. It has a parallel interface only, as opposed to the other two of the trio on test, which have serial interfaces as well.

The paper tray, which supports A4, letter, legal and executive sizes, slots in underneath the unit, as is the case with all three machines on test. This is great for space saving once it's loaded, but I found slotting the H-P's tray back in required practice, as quite precise location of each side is called for.

The 4L has Resolution Enhancement technology (RET) which, in tandem with H-P's Microfine toner gives first class print quality as far as text – even italics – is concerned. The combined toner/drum cartridge is claimed to be good for 3,000 pages of average use, but H-P have also provided an EconoMode – fine for drafts, internal correspondence and the like – which can increase toner life by up to 50 per cent.

A useful feature for those who place large demands



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Multimedia for the

Will every household shelf boast a Photo CD collection, or will the failure of the High Street to realise the potential of photos on disc doom Photo CD to a CDTV-like existence?

Up until now computers have been confined to the odd High Street store and specialist computer shops. The mass public of the 30-plus age category did not have to follow the technology component of the

National Curriculum, and as such many people switch off when the word computer drops into conversation.

Yet multimedia appeals to a wider audience, and Photo CD could be the hook to spark the home multimedia revolution. The technology, history, file formats and the usefulness of the official Kodak Multiplayer are laid bare.

*Kerry Culbert
unravels the
mysteries of Photo
CD, a way of
viewing snapshots
rivalled only by the
humble photo
album*

ALTHOUGH Kodak Photo CD was announced in 1990, it only reached the High Street at the end of 1992. After jointly developing the process with Phillips, who went on to produce CD-i, Kodak have astutely set up a monopoly regarding what equipment a bureau can use during the conversion process.

A Photo CD image processing workstation called the PIW 2200 is required, which consists of a high resolution 35mm film scanner, a Sun SparcStation running Sun and Kodak software, one or two CD writers and a Kodak X7700 thermal dye printer. Oh, and about £80,000 to buy it all.

Disappearing film

Unlike multimedia set ups you can't assemble a bureau inexpensively by shopping around for parts separately from cut price manufacturers.

Once you place an order at a High Street store and the film disappears into a bag to be seen again in two weeks (or a week with a lot of luck), while you dream of watching yourself on TV or monitor screen, all kinds of processes are going on at the Photo Lab.

The first stage is scanning the film. Each scan takes up to 18Mb, which after compression with the Sun SparcStation is reduced to 5Mb, meaning 125 pictures are capable of being stored on each CD. Just imagine the comparative photo album space needed to store the same number of pictures.

This image file is converted to the Image Pac Format where it is represented in five resolutions. This is where the debate regarding Kodak Photo-CD players and multi-session CD-Rom drives really hots up.

With a CD-Rom you are not stuck with Kodak's hardware and software. Kodak's machine only lets three

resolutions come into view, whereas you can view all five with a CD-Rom.

Not only that, but CD-Rom drives can be as cheap as £150, although multi-session double speed drives like Panasonic's can cost as much as £299. When you consider a Kodak Photo CD player costs £299-£369, you begin to ask whether the official Kodak player is worthwhile.

The resolutions in Image Pac Format are:

- Thumbnail (192 x 128, Base/16)
- Snapshot (384 x 256, Base/4)
- TV Standard (786 x 512, Base)
- HDTV (1536 x 1024, Base X4)
- Photographic (3072 x 2048, Base X16)

Kodak names its different resolutions around TV sizes which it calls Base. The image information is stored in Photo YCC, which is based on the colour information in CMYK (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, Black).

The problem with using a TV is that the image resolution is invariably better than the ability of the TV to display it. As TV resolution quality improves the image sharpness will improve, but the standard SVGA monitor currently has a big lead.

The Kodak Writer next stores the Pac file, each set of images making up one session. Each time images are added the printer produces an inlay for the disc box with small pictures of each image on the back.

At this point a set of prints is also produced, usually free of charge, which are useful to send to relatives who are less enlightened and still store photographs in albums.

Another advantage of buying a CD-Rom drive is that there is a wide choice of software which can read Photo



These pictures were taken with a 35mm camera and transferred to Photo CD



Kodak Multiplayer

THERE are three Kodak Photo CD players, PCD 265 and PCD 865 being the main ones. The PCD 5865 is basically the same as the 865 except it has picture numbers on screen.

The prices are £299 and £369 respectively so the 865 is the one to go for as pictures can be cropped on screen after zooming in and rotating, and then saved in the machine's memory.

The pictures remain untouched on the disc, just the limited editing options used are recorded and re-enacted the next time that picture is selected.

It also means that images can be indexed in lists so that next time the snapshots are viewed the less photogenic poses can be skipped. Unwanted features can be erased and portions of interest expanded.

Although a leaflet I picked up in BT Express stated that the system fitted "neatly under your television", the unit is extremely large and bulky.

This is probably to justify the excessive price label.

The remote control is more streamlined, and extremely easy to use. The

control pad is very sensitive to the touch, and the numbers of the images being viewed appear on a digital display in the centre of the unit.

The disc tray is on the left hand side and can play music CDs as well. The number of control buttons on the unit looks a bit excessive, so that it comes across as an antiquated video player. Fast forwarding and rewinding adds to this analogy.

The picture quality on a TV screen is much clearer and lighter than on prints and shows much more detail. If only the marketing material was as clear.

What is frightening about all the information leaflets in the High Street is that nowhere on them does it mention the CD-Rom drive alternative. They are extremely glossy and full of clichés and inaccuracies. You are limited by what the system itself has to offer, which isn't that much.

The sad fact is that most customers in the High Street will not know about the CD-Rom alternative, and as such many will be constrained by the limitations of the Kodak Photo CD player.

order took two minutes to process.

I was told it took 10 working days to return. Some 11 days later the assistant at first said it hadn't been 10 days, and then couldn't find any CDs which had come back and so assumed they had not come back from the lab.

I'm still waiting for my disc. BT Express told me it would take "at least two weeks to get the disc back", but didn't seem to have any kind of coherent system worked out as of yet.

The High Street stores are ill prepared for Photo CD, and as such the public will not be as responsive in their turn. CD-Roms are cheaper, provide the best range and quality of images and can be operated easily depending on what software is in use.

Yet without better advertising and more manufacturers producing alternatives to Kodak's hardware and software, the High Street and the customer will probably fumble on with the Kodak option as best they can. ■



FOR a full and unbiased guide to multimedia and the CD-Rom alternative see the October issue of *PC Home*. For the latest CD releases turn to *PC Home* on Page 133.

masses

CD, and image processing packages can also be utilised.

Photomagic from Micrografix is particularly accessible. It has to be said that a double speed drive is particularly useful when viewing Photo CD images as the highest resolution can take some time, like about 16 minutes, to load. The standard resolutions are very quick on a double speed drive, and are quicker than the Kodak Multiplayer.

Kodak Photo CD may have made it to the High Street, but the High Street seems to be more confused about the technology than the customer.

PC CD-Rom and Phillips CD-i machines can both read Photo CD yet BT Express of Macclesfield told us: "Kodak discs weren't compatible with multi-session CD-Rom drives, but Phillips make the Kodak players which is why the CD-i machine plays the discs." Obviously a fine grasp of the technology there.

Misleading statement

An assistant at nearby Boots didn't know what a CD-Rom drive was at first, and despite having spoken to a manager at the store, an area manager and head office in Nottingham (who said they would be revising the information on their leaflets), four weeks later I walked into the same branch and had another assistant make further misleading statements.

Actually leaving a film in for processing was a painful experience too. It took the assistant 20 minutes, two phonecalls, advice from two other counter staff and a lot of frantic searching for an order form before I was given a receipt slip.

Despite it saying on the leaflet that the film would be back on disc in seven working days, it took eight and a lot of chasing including a phonecall to Kodak. It cost £30.65 for a 36 exposure and a 24 exposure to be transferred to a new disc.

The only blessing is that once you have a disc, other films can be added to it at a lower cost because you will have already paid the £5 fee for the actual disc.

Smaller photographic stores appear more efficient on the surface, and although slightly more expensive, more knowledgeable and efficient. I left a film to be put on a new disc in Cheshire Cameras in Macclesfield, and the

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Design station

BECAUSE the call for printed material never ceases, it is always a viable business idea to set yourself up as a DTP studio, providing you can offer a competitively priced service matched with speed and quality.

We aren't talking about spending hundreds of thousands of pounds on image setting equipment and A3 flatbed colour scanners. This is a guide to how to set yourself up in the DTP business from home - what's practical, how much it costs, what you can charge and where to draw the line.

YOU probably already have a computer system that is capable of supplying quality output, so you may simply need to furnish yourself with the correct software and a few extra bits of hardware.

Starting with the machine, you need, at the very least, a 386-based box with 4Mb of memory. Although you'll probably get away with a fast 286 and perhaps 2Mb of ram, it will be an uphill struggle and soon become tediously slow. You'll also need a hard drive and the bigger the better as DTP documents can be huge.

In terms of display, this largely depends whether you're going to be dealing solely with monochrome or dabbling in colour work too. If you're sticking to mono, you'll only really need an EGA system - CGA is not really good enough - but VGA will offer better screen results.

With colour work, VGA is imperative and a 24-bit colour system is vital for quality colour repro so that you get the best possible colour representation on screen before committing anything to the printer.

You'll also need a printer - see Page 45 for printer info and reviews. Be sure to make the right choice before parting with any money.

If you're going to concentrate on quality monochrome output, I'd recommend a laser printer. Although these cost more than an inkjet, you get faster results and better quality.

Colour inkjets

If money is at a premium or you're going to dabble in colour as well, plump for an inkjet. Colour inkjet machines are now very cost effective options for the home user and have even more application in the semi-professional environment.

You'll also find that a scanner - see Page 41 for reviews of low-cost models - plays an important role in the DTP field. Scanners can offer huge savings in both time and money.

If the job involves using a photograph, diagram or illustration, a simple 256 grey scale hand scanner can save a fortune in professional scanning costs. The quality is, obviously, not up to that of a professional unit, but will often suffice.

Even if it doesn't it is useful for scanning a rough



image so that you can drop it into the page and design the rest of the document without a hole in the middle. You can then give the image to a professional DTP house for high quality scanning and usage when you come to print the final run.

A colour scanner is probably too expensive in the first instance, though a couple of low cost handheld devices are worth considering.

The soft approach

Choosing the software for a business will, again, depend on the type of work you intend to carry out and on the figure at the bottom of your bank statement. It's all very well to recommend QuarkXPress as being the best tool for the job, but at over £1,000, it's likely to take a long time to pay for itself.

Take it slow; plump for a good all-round package such as Press Works, Express Publisher or Page Plus 2, or, if you can't abide Windows, Express Publisher for Dos is perfectly adequate.

Page Plus 2 is probably the best option as it has a good number of facilities and is very cost effective. For just £117 (£99 ex VAT) you can own Page Plus 2 and a whole host of clip art images and fonts to get you well under way.

If you want to stick to mono production, fine - simply choose a good colour DTP package and ignore the colour facilities. Most mono packages run under Dos and the only decent package I've seen is Express Publisher.

The problem with DTP is often the lack of clip art. Once you actually start producing documents to order, you'll appreciate the next statement. While thousands of clip art images exist in many different file formats, it is rare that you'll ever find one that exactly suits your needs.

Thankfully, most clip art images are royalty and copyright free so that you can alter them as required. Undoubtedly the most flexible package for doing this is CorelDRAW and this should also be on your shopping list.

If the cost is too prohibitive, either look for version 3 (around £100) or consider a cheaper option such as 1st

Paul Gaunt gets to grips with setting yourself up as a home DTP business

Costings

TAKING into account that virtually all readers will already own a suitable computer, the following figures do not include that cost and are approximate. They should be used as a guide only. If a laser printer is preferred, you should add around £350.

DTP software.....	£100
Drawing package	£100
Scanner	£200
Inkjet Printer	£350
Subtotal.....	£750

Repro charges

The average cost of producing a sheet of film or bromide from a computer document is

between £10 and £20, depending on the bureau, work involved and quantity. If you need any extra images to be stripped in, you'll be charged extra for the work.

Remember that for a full colour document to be produced, you'll need four films, one for the cyan, magenta, yellow and black separations so you'll need to multiply the above figures by four to get a better idea.

Actual costs can vary wildly depending on the printer, the methods and quality, the paper used and the actual size of the run. High Street print companies are not usually the cheapest and are normally geared up for the complete job including the design work.

A small, back street operation is likely to give the most competitive rates. For a run of

around 1,000 A4 leaflets printing in a single colour on 80gsm paper, expect to pay anything between £35 and £80.

Incidentally, printers usually won't take the actual amount of ink into account when costing a job, so a leaflet with lots of ink is likely to cost the same as a letter head.

Your charges

Quoting for work is an awkward subject to offer advice on. Your best bet is to contact some local firms and ask for quotes. You can then begin to price your own work more accurately so that you can offer competitive rates. It's also a good idea to quote individually for jobs as each one will take a different amount of time to complete.

► Design or DesignWorks from GST with a view to lashing out on a copy of Corel once things pick up.

It's also worth pointing out that such daring packages are often supplied with an array of ready made clip art images and Corel 4 is supplied with a CD-Rom that's packed full of useful images, fonts and so on.

The kind of work you should expect to do from your back bedroom is likely to include leaflets or flyers, business cards and letter heads, small posters, report layouts and other smaller material. A cheap service for job hunters is also a decent money spinner as an eye catching curriculum vitae is worth spending a little cash on.

Home production

It is highly unlikely that you'll want to produce a whole magazine from your lounge – though the deputy ed once produced a 100-page effort for six months – but parish newsletters and other simple jobs get the thumbs up.

Promoting the service is possibly the easiest part of the job. The best way of getting work is by word of mouth, but until you've actually done any, this is impractical. Start off by placing a series of classified adverts in your local newspapers and perhaps a few cards in local shop windows.

How about approaching some local establishments

and offering your services? Take-away food retailers and restaurants always need menus and small posters and many small shops find that leaflets detailing sale goods work well.

Prepare a range of appropriate sample material to present to them and you could get the job.

The final stages

Getting pages into print involves a number of different stages. Before you ever think of completing a job, always print off a rough copy so that you or the client can check it for any errors – this saves time and money in the long run.

If the final quality of the job is not too important, you may find the client is willing to have it printed on a laser or inkjet and then photocopied.

Should higher quality be required, the page can be supplied to a printer as camera-ready copy which is professionally scanned, filmed and finally printed. This improves the quality no end especially if you are using grey tints or halftone images.

If premium quality is required, you'll need to take the professional approach. This will first involve a call to your local typesetting/DTP bureau to find out its preferred method of page transfer.

You may well discover that such companies are kitted out with top notch software such as Quark and PageMaker and can't accept files that are generic to Page Plus and similar packages.

All is not lost as the Encapsulated Postscript (EPS) file format is here to save the day.

This is a brilliant method of transferring desktop publishing documents and images between software applications that wouldn't usually communicate on the same level.

The file is converted to a standard format and can be dumped on a floppy disk and taken to the bureau for running to film or bromide.

As a last ditch alternative, you can often print a document directly to a disk file, rather than to a printer. If you save a PostScript file on disk, most DTP houses will be able to print the contents on their professional output devices.

The main disadvantage of this is that colour output has to be separated by yourself and is a feature that is not supplied with all colour DTP package. ■

Screen colours

ALTHOUGH the latest technology allows thousands of colours on screen at any one time, you should bear in mind the method by which they appear. A standard colour monitor works by firing three coloured guns – red, green and blue – at light emitting phosphor and different colours are produced where the guns merge.

Compare this method of three beams of coloured light to four different coloured inks – cyan, magenta, yellow and black. Various colours are produced by mixing different quantities of coloured inks and transferring the result to paper.

Because the two methods are so very different, major discrepancies can occur between the colour you see on screen and the final printed output. Therefore, unless you are using a painting package, you should largely disregard the screen colours and rely on a CMYK colour model in the software and a good quality colour book for actually choosing the colours.

Such books should be available from all good book shops and professional art suppliers. You may even be able to purchase one from your local bureau or colour printer.

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DTM-7-WAT GM* Sound Module (Windows)
DTM-7-APL GM* Sound Module (Mac)
(All packs include SC-7 Sound Module, sequencing, compositional software and connecting cables)

Sound cards

ATW-10
16 Bit Sampling and GM* Synthesis Card
DTM-100-AT
GM* (includes SCC1 sound card, sequencing, compositional software and connecting cables)

*GM stands for General MIDI, the standard approved by Microsoft for the replay of MIDI files under Windows 3.1

Speakers

MA-20 Micro Monitor
MA-7 Stereo Micro Monitor
CS-30 Stereo Micro Monitor
(All speakers are self powered and magnetically shielded)

MIDI keyboards

PC-150 MIDI Keyboard Controller
PC-200 MkII MIDI keyboard Controller

For further information on the Roland CM range or the name of your nearest Roland dealer contact:

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DOT MATRIX PRINTERS

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Grab a piece of the

*Lance Concannon
rounds off last
month's video
feature with a
look at a range
of digitisers*

MANY people believe that jumping on the multimedia bandwagon is simply a matter of bolting a CD-Rom drive on to their PCs. Not so, the concept of multimedia is that of combining text, graphics, animation, sound and video in an application.

In this article we will be looking at several pieces of hardware designed to enable you to incorporate the last of these components into your computer system.

The Video Spigot for Windows and Captivator cards will capture video clips from a VCR, camcorder or other such source, which can then be edited and played back on any suitably equipped PC.

The others will grab still frames and save them as graphics files, which can be viewed on practically any PC.

None of the cards featured in this article comes supplied with leads. To connect most VHS video recorders to any of these systems you would need a Scart-to-phono lead, available from most electronics stores.

If you intend using another video source, such as a camcorder, you should refer to the card's manual.

Video Spigot

THERE are plenty of reasons why people would want to store video sequences on hard disk. According to the manufacturers of Video Spigot, you can embed them in presentations, newsletters, training materials and storyboards to create compelling, dynamic documents.

Although the card has no proprietary software, it does come bundled with Microsoft's Video for Windows and the appropriate drivers. Video Spigot accepts Composite or S-VHS input in either PAL, NTSC or SECAM formats.

If you have a 24-bit True-colour card you can display up to 16.7 million colours, but those of us with an old



Video Spigot comes with no proprietary software except the Video for Windows drivers

Vidi PC 24



Unless you've got perfect digital freeze frame VCR, this is the best Vidi 24 can do

For some reason the programs grabbed the first image they received from the VCR and steadfastly refused to capture a new one. When I tried to do so I was simply given the same picture that I had grabbed previously.

The manual is very vague and offered me little assistance. The only way I found to remedy the situation was to switch off my PC and start the program again.

The package's one saving grace is that it comes with a free copy of Photo Finish from Z Soft. However, you do have to return a card in order to receive this.

THIS is probably one of the most annoying pieces of hardware I've ever had to install. The Vidi PC 24 card is a single frame grabber which will capture 24-bit images from any video source. However, if you are using a VCR, it must have a perfect freeze frame, otherwise you will only be able to capture mono images from moving video.

Despite the manual's claims, I was only able to capture very low quality mono pictures. Software for both Dos and Windows is included and both programs are very poor.

The packages were very unstable and frequently decided not to bother working for no apparent reason. When they did mysteriously attempt to carry out their function, I only managed to achieve limited success.

The packages were very unstable and frequently decided not to bother working for no apparent reason. When they did mysteriously attempt to carry out their function, I only managed to achieve limited success.

PC HOME PROFILE	
PRODUCT	VIDI PC 24
Price	£292.58 (£249 ex VAT)
Supplier	Rombo, Kirkton Campus, Livingston, Scotland, EH54 7AZ
Tel	0506 414631
FOR	Low spec machine okay (1Mb 286)
AGAINST	Very unfriendly, difficult to get working properly, you need perfect freeze frame on your VCR for colour grabs

Captivator

THIS card also accepts either a composite or S-VHS input in PAL or NTSC formats but not Secam. It does, however, offer several advantages over the previous card, not least of which is its significantly reduced memory requirement of 4MB.

As well as Video for Windows, Captivator also comes bundled with VideoSnap, a Windows based frame grabbing utility. Although this is better than Video for Windows' grabber it still doesn't provide the very best results.

The main advantage this card has is that it comes with the Video Logic YUV video format driver which enables you to view video in larger windows at greater speeds. Using this software I was able to get a perfectly acceptable frame rate using a half size window.

I was genuinely impressed with the simple installation process - just a matter of plugging the card in, installing the software and connecting my VCR. The software automatically detected which kind of input I was using and I had the whole setup working within 20 minutes.

Captivator does offer marginally better performance than Video Spigot but I don't think this justifies an extra £60.

action

512k Trident card will have to make do with 256 colours. However, the highest resolution you will be able to display with any card is 320 x 240 pixels. Spigot can grab single frames at 640 x 480, but the quality is not very good.

On my 486 33MHz the highest resolution slowed down to about one frame every two seconds. To get a reasonable frame rate I had to use about one third of the window's full size. However, a faster processor, more memory – I was using the minimum 8Mb – and a better graphics card would improve this performance.

Although this card is £60 cheaper than the Captivator, it offers practically the same performance, and I would recommend this as the best buy for motion video.

PC HOME PROFILE

PRODUCT	VIDEO SPIGOT
Price	£269.08 (£229 ex VAT)
Supplier	Unica, Unica House, Mowbray Street, Stockport, Cheshire, SK1 3EJ
Tel	061-429 8241
FOR	One of the cheapest video cards available, reasonable performance
AGAINST	Needs high spec machine

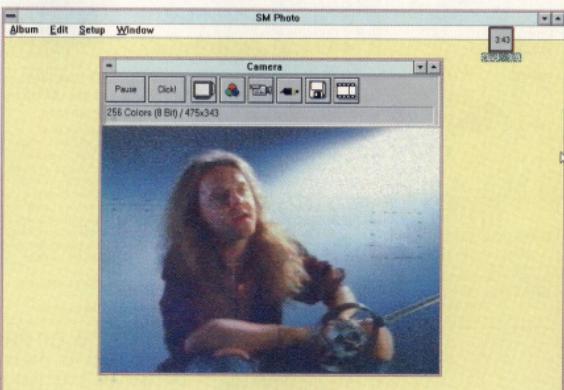
PC HOME BEST BUY



Captivator comes with VideoSnap, a single frame grabber

PC HOME PROFILE

PRODUCT	CAPTIVATOR
Price	£339.58 (£289 ex VAT)
Supplier	Video Logic, Home Park Estate, Kings Langley, Hertfordshire, WD4 8LZ
Tel	0923 260511
FOR	Offers slightly better performance than Spigot, less memory required
AGAINST	Costs more



Screen Machine's software automatically updates the preview screen, but there is sometimes a brief time gap between what you see on screen and what you actually grab

Screen Machine Lite

COMPARED to the Vidi PC 24, this card is a completely different. Within 20 minutes of opening the box I was merrily grabbing high resolution 256 colour at an astounding rate of knots.

Unlike the Rombo unit, Screen Machine allows you to take colour grabs while the video is still playing so you don't need a perfect freeze frame. The accompanying software is Windows only, but other than this, it's only real fault is that it tends to over complicate the process of saving grabs to disk. However, a quick flick through the well written manual makes everything much clearer.

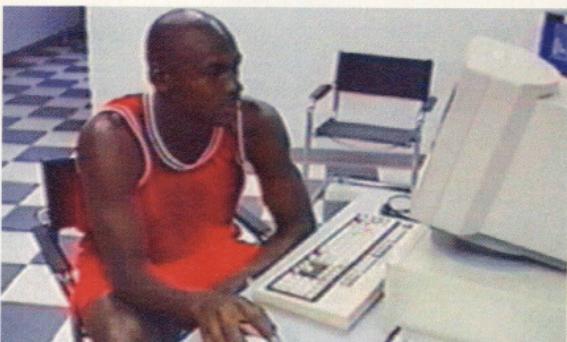
This card has everything that I would look for in a digitiser – all you have to do is plug it in and go. The software automatically displays whatever it is receiving from the video and updates this every two to three seconds, depending on the window size.

Once you see an image you want to grab, it's simply a matter of clicking on a button. You can set the card to deliver maximum frame update speed, best image quality or a compromise.

If you want to grab good quality images from video with minimum frustration, this is the card for you.

PC HOME PROFILE

PRODUCT	SCREEN MACHINE LITE
Price	£581.63 (£495 ex VAT)
Supplier	Magnifeye, Studio 6, Walmer Studios, 235-239 Walmer Road, London
Tel	071-221 8024
FOR	Easy to set up and use, High quality results, automatically updates preview window
AGAINST	Very expensive so you'll have to justify a large budget, no DOS software



Screen Machine Lite grabbed this 256 colour image from a VCR without having to pause the tape

Multitrack stars

HERE are two brand new sound editing and mixing programs. They can be used with any Windows-supported sound card, and if you have one that handles 16-bit sound, you'll get CD quality.

Both programs can be used to produce music specifically, or used generally in multimedia applications such as presentations.

Their ability to mix up to 16 Windows Wave files

makes them the cheapest digital multitrack tape recorders in the world. Indeed, they could easily head a revolution in home recording and replace portastudios, the present standard analogue home recording medium.

The first program, Digital Soup, has features that give it a specific bias towards music production, while the second, Sound Impressions, is suited more towards multimedia.

Digital Soup

DIGITAL Soup Sound Professional (DSSP), as well as having such a superb name, is quite simply the cheapest 16-track CD-quality recording studio in the world. It enables you to record sound on your hard disk (at 16-bit and 44 KHz sampling if you want) from any of a variety of sources: Microphone, tape recorder, CD and so on, depending on what inputs your sound card supports.

Most cards come with software to do this, but with DSSP you have the ability to mix up to 16 different sound files into one.

Each recorded sound is stored on a track and you can also load already recorded sound files into any of the tracks. Using the program's various editing facilities, you edit each track or parts of it to taste (though you can view only two tracks at any one time).

Once satisfied with the sound of each track, you get the program to mix any or all of them into a stereo pair.

This can be saved as a single Windows Wave file and used by other Windows programs (such as the well-known Cakewalk).

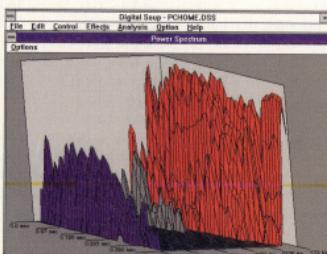
Digital Soup uses two modes for editing. For short pieces you can work on the actual sound data (Data mode), but for longer ones there's Formula mode. This only makes references to the data and doesn't do any calculation on it till the end, so it's much faster.

This is also what they call in the professional music world non-destructive editing – your original data is not destroyed unless you overwrite the file.

Other editing features include being able to change the volume of each track by a percentage, or to position



Digital Soup's main editing screen – can mix up to 16 files into a single one



A power Spectrum graph is available in Digital Soup for the mathematicians

it in the stereo field – something not at present supported by Sound Impression. There's even a real-time panning effect available.

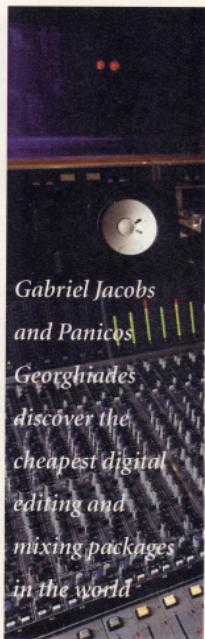
In addition, there's a four-band graphic equaliser feature. You can define up to four bands of the sound frequency spectrum and increase or decrease their level. This allows you to give emphasis to certain instruments or to cut out disturbing interference sounds. Bands can be as wide or as narrow as you wish, and you can save settings in files.

All the above features help to shape the sound to your taste, and you can be assisted by several tools in the process.

There are cut and paste facilities, and you can label and mark sections with text notes. What's more, when editing a stereo track, you can work on either or both channels (lock mode) or on each of the two tracks separately.

As well as the tools to shape the sound, there are also tools to enhance it. These are delay, time fit (stretches or shortens the duration without affecting the pitch), pitch change (for Donald Duck voices), compress (softens the loud parts and leaves the soft parts unchanged, thus creating a more dynamic sound), reverse in time, and modulation (tremolo).

Finally, Digital Soup comes with a free CD containing 70 well recorded and useful sound effects for you to sample and use. This CD alone must be worth about £30.



*Gabriel Jacobs
and Panicos
Georgiades
discover the
cheapest digital
editing and
mixing packages
in the world*

PC HOME PROFILE

PRODUCT	Digital Soup Sound Professional
Price	£80.85 (ex VAT)
Supplier	Digital Music, 27 Leven Close, Chandlers Ford, Hampshire SO5 3SH
Tel	0703 25213
FOR	Lots of features and special effects plus, a free CD
AGAINST	Very little



Sound Impression's Waveform Editor program in which you can record and edit Wave files



With Sound Impression you can edit multiple files at the same time



The Wave Composer enables you mix Wave files graphically

→ Sound Impression



Sound Impression's Deck

SOUND Impression is reminiscent of Stereo, which we reviewed in the July issue of *PC Home*. Both adopt a stack Hi-Fi system iconic user interface.

Sound Impression, however, makes the mixer section available even if your sound card is not on the supported list – a good point. It also has more features when it comes to editing sound data, even mixing different files together.

Of course, you can't expect everything: Stereo has a database for storing details about sound

files. But you only really need such a thing if you have hundreds of sounds and the time to sit down and catalogue them.

The iconic components of Sound Impression consist of the Mixer, the CD player, the Digital Audio player (Wave), and the Song Player (Midi).

OLE support

But that's far from all. In total there are 10 modules, including a Waveform editor where you can record and edit Wave files, a Wave Composer where you can visually mix up to 16 Wave files into one, and a Session Manager which lets you run any of the components synchronously.

The program supports OLE, and the implementation is quite substantial.

Not only can you link Wave files, as with the Windows Sound Recorder, you can also link Midi files, CD-audio segments, and even Mixer Panel settings. In

other words, if you're preparing a presentation you can rehearse and store the mixer setting within the OLE link. This is a useful (and unique) feature.

The Mixing Panel has stereo faders for input (Aux, Mic or Line), Wave, Midi and CD inputs, and Master output, and is particularly useful for live work (presentations).

You can have a CD playing at the same time as speaking through the microphone input and playing a Midi file. And with the mixer, you can control the various levels.

It's possible to have up to 16 wave-editing sessions running at the same time. To edit a sound, you can either record it, open a

Wave file, or drag and drop one into Sound Impression.

The program has many editing features similar to other packages but also includes two which are – again – unique: A noise (hiss) filter, and a popping sound remover.

Popping is the ugly interference you get when you utter the sounds p or b very close to a microphone. The program analyses the waveform and removes it. The removal works better than the hiss removal, but it must be said this is a very difficult feature to program, and costs about £60 a minute to achieve professionally at a bureau service. It was, thus, a nice surprise to see it included here, even if the results are not always top class.

Effects galore

Editing facilities also include fades, reverse, gain, add/remove silence, echo, chorus and flange effects, stereo pan, placing of markers, merge into stereo or split into mono, and (of course) cut, copy and paste. A useful and unusual feature (if your card supports it) is recording at frequencies other than the standard 11, 22, and 44 KHz. Sound Impression supports a variable sampling rate.

The Wave composer screen gives you 16 horizontal lines on which you can place up to 16 Wave files and position them in time as you require by dragging them along. After auditioning them, you can mix them into a single stereo Wave file.

This latter feature (known in the business as multitracking) is also found in Digital Soup. It's a very powerful facility, since this sort of mixing will cost you a lot of money if you need to do it with any other method.

Analogue cassette tape recorders cost about £1,000 for eight tracks, and digital ones cost at least £4,000. Although they give longer recording time, using one of these two programs can give you CD quality, and both are adequate in this respect for short pieces.

What is *short*? That depends on the size and speed of your hard disk. ■

Oodles of data

BOTH Digital Soup and Sound Impression include a CD player utility and both allow synchronised start playback, which makes recording sounds from CD into your PC a lot easier.

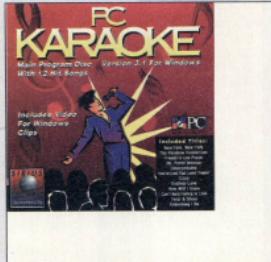
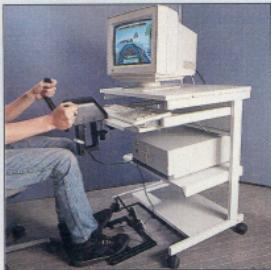
Neither of these programs takes up a lot of hard disk space, but the sound data does (about 10 Mb per minute stereo at CD quality, or half that for any music work).

Multimedia work that will be played out of small speakers could be recorded down to even 2.5 Mb per stereo minute, but that's still a lot.

You also need a lot of ram. Although stated minimum requirements for both programs are low, we would recommend at least a 386, preferably with 8Mb ram or more, and/or a very fast hard disk.

PC HOME PROFILE

PRODUCT	ASYSYTEM'S SOUND IMPRESSION
Price	£99.88 (£85 ex VAT)
Supplier	Digital Music, 27 Leven Close, Chandlers Ford, Hampshire SO5 3SH
Tel	0703 25213
FOR	Compact program with bags of features many of them unique
AGAINST	Very little



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Vision on II

AS I explained in the introduction to the first part of this series on Windows Paintbrush, not everyone is an artist and it is no easy job teaching people how to draw. Whatever the limits or scope of your ability and ambition, this series is designed to show some of the ways this versatile graphics program can be used.

The tools and techniques described in this article can be applied to other styles of artwork than those shown here and combined with text to produce notices, posters, facsimile news-sheets and logo design.

As Windows is supplied with wordprocessing pro-

grams it would be redundant to use Paintbrush for that purpose, although it can be done. The bitmaps produced can be exported to compatible graphics software such as CorelDRAW to make use of its sometimes more complex tools and functions.

Although I have tried to make every article complete within itself, readers are recommended to use the series as a whole for reference.

Although it was written for different software, it may also be useful to refer to Lorraine Hall's Intellidraw tutorial in the September issue of *PC Home* for hints on technique and approach.

LAST month this article showed the initial stages of producing a bitmap drawing of that great undiscovered action hero, Dirk Strongbuster. From a sketchy stick drawing I had worked up to a more complete and solid figure.

Taking up where we left off, I had just begun using the Zoom-in feature in the View command for more detailed work.

The step-by-step guide on the next page shows the stages in producing a full-colour image.

Remember that only the paint fill and freehand brush tools will work in the zoom-in feature. This makes it slightly more complicated to erase mistakes. As we are still at a black and white stage, mistakes can be erased in zoom-in by using the freehand brush with the white colour selected to cover over unwanted black lines.

Makeshift eraser

In this way the freehand brush serves as a makeshift eraser. This method even allows you to tidy up untidy lines or reduce the thickness of lines which are too thick. Obviously, when we come to working in colour, this procedure can be adapted by selecting the appropriate colour instead of white. Again, practice and experimentation are recommended.

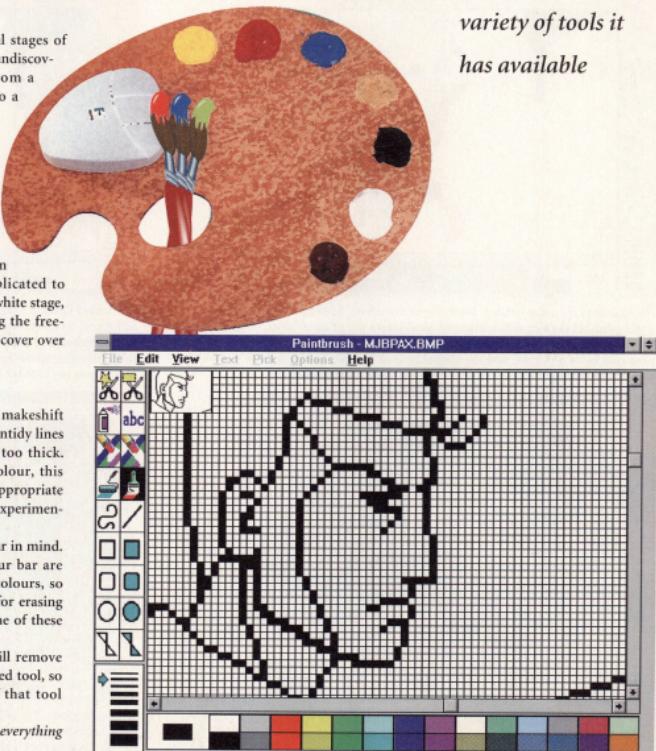
There are some other general points to bear in mind. Some of the more subtle tones in the colour bar are actually made up of patterns of two basic colours, so care must be exercised when using the tool for erasing specified colours, as it might erase half of one of these complex tones.

The Undo command in the Edit menu will remove everything that has been done with the selected tool, so be sure you are satisfied with the work of that tool before switching to another.

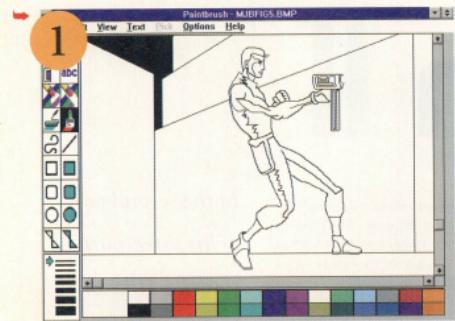
Equally, be sure that you want to remove everything that the selected tool has done.

If you use the Undo command while in zoom-in, it will treat the zoom-in as the selected tool and remove everything done with all the tools that you have used therein.

In the second part of his three-part tutorial Mike Breen looks at Windows Paintbrush and the uses of the wide variety of tools it has available

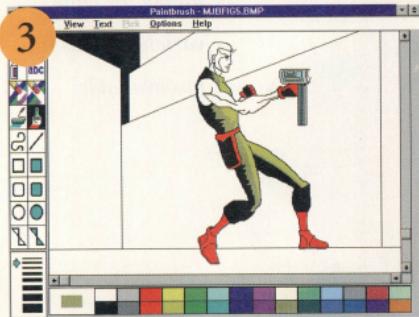


Using the zoom-in feature for detail in the manner described in the text. Although the work looks rough and untidy, the inset box at the top left shows how smooth and finished it will look on the actual screen. When working at this level, it is often necessary to produce a line one bit at a time, dot by dot. Painstaking trial and error and some knowledge of anatomy may be necessary for a satisfactory finished product



1

Moving the zoom-in box around the figure, using either the scroll bars while in zoom-in or by zooming out and selecting a new area each time, we can finalise costume detail and mark areas for shadows. Now we are ready to move on to colour. Unless you are trying for a deliberate effect, the colours on the figure should not be lost or overwhelmed by brighter or louder background colours



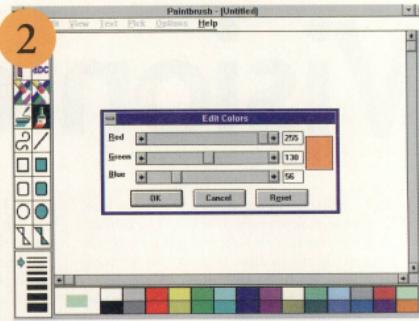
3

The beginnings of a colour scheme. Depending on the subject, you might want to create a finished drawing with background detail before you go on to colour. Note how two separate but similar colours are used on the costume to create a more solid figure that looks, with the black shadow at his back, as though there were a light source in front. This source is the explosive fire of his cannon



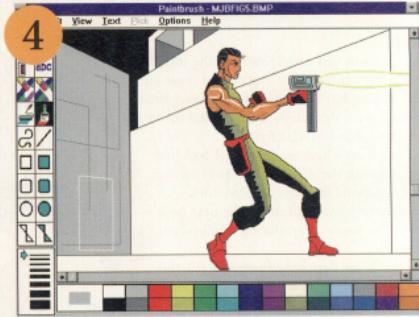
5

Back in the zoom-in feature, showing the detailed colour work in the background. The darker blue line around the head will form a solid background area for point-fill, while creating a white outline around the figure. Note on the face how some of the more complex shades in the colour palette are made up of dots of different colours, and how a few simple grey lines create highlights for the hair



2

If you look at your skin you will see it is not a smooth, single flesh colour, but an unsightly mix of red, yellow, purple, brown and white. Curiously, the Paintbrush default palette omits an appropriate flesh tone, so it is necessary to create one. These are the approximate values which I use to customise such a colour, although it looks more like a first-aid plaster than anything found in nature



4

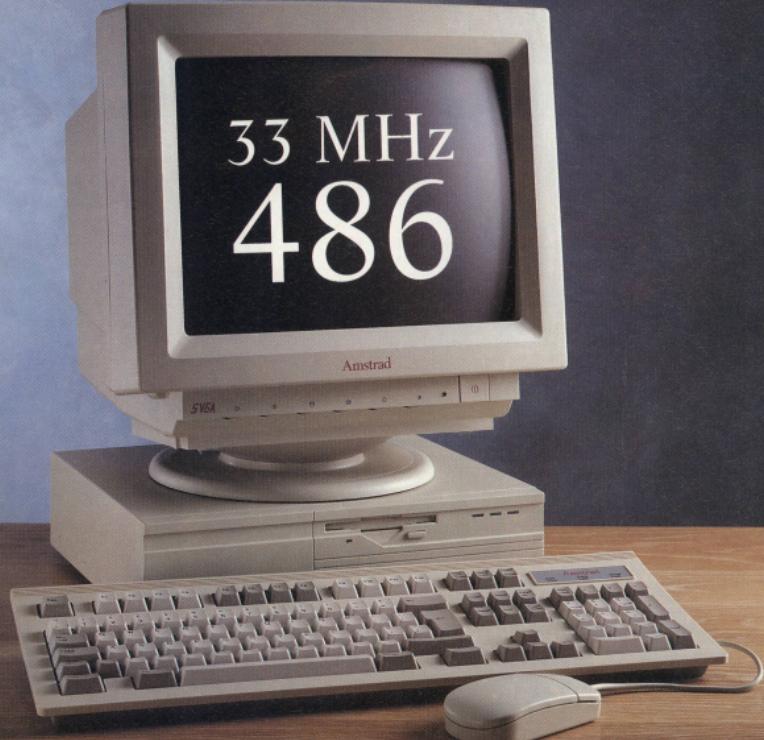
The finished figure. It's the focus of my picture, so I have not worried about the background, except to suggest an area of tunnels and platforms. Note the use of brown shadows and white highlights with the flesh tone, again to create a more solid, three-dimensional appearance. Ideas and research for this kind of modelling of the figure can be found in comics, sports photos or, um, swimsuit magazines



6

Poised for action. The white outline, produced in the zoom-in feature, is an old trick in comics and animation to make the character stand out. Note also the use of the spray tool to blend the dark green on the wall with a lighter one to suggest a burst of light from the weapon. Although I describe this as finished, there is no end to how often you can return to play around with colours or detail

Next month I finish with a look at some of the features of Paintbrush not touched on yet, as well as possibilities such as photo editing.



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LEMMINGS A10-015 Shoots game with lots of things with knights, castles and wizards. VGA, mouse.

LINEAR A10-047 The third in the Kean series. Save the babytaker from being the main course for dinner.

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LINEAR A10-049 The fifth in the Kean series, game in which you have to fight by boulders, arrows, weapons and more.

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LINE

Words on Dos

MOST people have a wordprocessor or text editor of some sort. It's one of the most common applications of all. Yet for various reasons, we often aren't too happy with our current one and want something a bit better – providing, of course, it doesn't cost too much.

Galaxy Lite **RECOMMENDED**

LIKE many shareware wordprocessors, Galaxy has a long history and is well established. This Dos program is reasonably compact and you can even run it from a low density 3.5in disk. Despite its small size, it is packed with useful features and very fast.

During the installation process, among other things, you have the opportunity to select a 43 (EGA) or 50 (VGA) line display or the standard 25 lines, and the printer. Although most of the printer drivers are for dot matrix machines like the Epson, I was pleased to see support for Hewlett-Packard Laserlets.

At the top of the editing screen is an information line which simply lists the file being edited and reminds you that F10 accesses the menu.

Pressing this key displays a menu bar at the top of the screen and it's easy to access the functions you need from the drop-down menus.

Galaxy Lite is clearly intended to be an alternative wordprocessor to WordStar as it can read and write its files and responds to many of the keyboard commands. If you have used WordStar before, perhaps at work, you'll feel quite at home.

Two editing windows can be opened to work on two files simultaneously and text can be cut, copied and

Compact Writer

THIS is pretty compact as its name suggests, but it's not as small as some packages. Although a fairly powerful wordprocessor with some excellent features, it is also mind-numbingly difficult to use. You won't be able to boot it up and start typing straightaway as with some programs as the commands are very obscure. You'll need to print out most of the 64 help files.

At the foot of the screen is the ruler and just above is a line listing some of the function key commands. The third line from bottom is the command line and the Escape key toggles between command and edit modes. Unless you have a printout of the help files you won't have a clue what commands to type - it's Edit to load a file and Get to merge, for instance.

Compact Writer contains some good features, such as the ability to edit up to 10 documents at once, and switch between them with the press of a key.

Other neat tricks you can perform include adding up a column of numbers and aligning a column of numbers by their decimal point. It makes light work of invoices, bank statements, shopping lists and the like.

Is your wordprocessor too slow, can't handle fonts, hasn't got a spelling checker or can't include graphics? There are shareware programs with all these features, and more. On test are seven of the most common packages which are available from a wide range of shareware libraries.

pasted from one to the other. Mouse control is limited to selecting items off the menu and can't be used for such things as selecting blocks of text.

such things as selecting blocks of text.

There is a 45,000 word dictionary for spell checking and a user dictionary for adding your own words. The file commands are good, with directory display, copy, rename and erase. Files can be loaded by highlighting the required one in the directory display.

Galaxy is fast and WordStar compatible.

The current time and date is inserted by simply hitting a key

Up to 10 permanent macros can be defined and one temporary one, which is lost when you quit. Mailmerge facilities are available using straightforward-forward comma delimited data files.

An Auto-Page feature inserts page break lines into your document on-screen to give you an idea of how it will appear on paper.

There's a lot in this wordprocessor, and it's pretty cheap, too. It's a pity it's not more accessible to novice and occasional users.

*Need a new
wordprocessor?
Roland Waddilove
shows what's on
offer in the
shareware market*

ADD A group of numbers you must first mark the area to be summed. Only one number per line should appear in the marked area. In the example to the right, place the cursor to the right of the '5' character and press **Ctrl-F1**. Place the cursor to the left of the '5' and press **Ctrl-F2**. Now the area you marked is now worked. Now hold down the **Ctrl** key and press **F6**. Note that the answer is placed in an inserted line below the last number in b summed.

It is not necessary for the numbers to be all could have positive numbers to the left and a right.

Press the **Type Key**

You may use the minus sign, if you prefer to indicate negative numbers.

File **editing.hlp** **Help** **File 1**

MISCELLANEOUS OPTIONS	
F1	Import File-Exp
F2	Modify Defaults
F3	Save Defaults
F4	Recall Defaults
F5-F8	Date/Time Stamp
F6	Print-Print Preview
F7	Special Lines
F8	Modify Tabs
F9	Invoke MACRO
F10	Save MACRO
esc	exit menu

select option desired

Compact is difficult to use, but powerful

Breeze

PC STAR BUY

FOR such a small package, it is surprising how powerful Breeze is. It's bristling with features and must represent the ultimate in shareware – it's almost good enough to be sold as a commercial package. The program is menu driven and hitting Esc displays the menu bar containing 10 options.

To give you an idea of its power, as well as the usual Load and Save commands, on the File menu are Pick to pick a recently edited file, Save As, Find File (a disk-wide search for any file specification), Merge and Dos commands to delete a file,

change directory or even shell out to the Dos prompt.

The Blocks menu nearly reaches to the bottom of the screen there are so many options. They include Analyse (a basic grammar checker and word counter), Sort (to sort the words), To and From Clip to cut and paste to the program's clipboard, Upper and Lower to alter the case as well as all the usual commands.

On the Printer menu are such goodies as printing a block only, printing only left or right-hand pages, page numbers and so on. In the registered version are graphical print preview and mailmerge facilities.

Calculations are easy thanks to a pop up calculator. There's a pop-up Ascii character table, screen saver, numeric analysis of a column of figures which displays the sum, average and standard deviation, and much more. So many extra options are built into Breeze that it is impossible to mention them all in a short review like this. It's pretty amazing for a shareware word-processor and deserves serious consideration. It's also cheap to register, too.



The user supported software concept (usually referred to as Breeze is easy to use and is packed with powerful features

PC Write

ONE of the first shareware wordprocessors ever written for the PC was PC Write. It must be at least 10 years old by now, and, I might add, well past its sell-by date. It was notoriously difficult to use, yet, the same time, very powerful too. Despite the addition of modern pull-down and cascading menus, it is still a bit of a pig.

The program is even more powerful than ever, but it's easy to see where the extra features have been bolted on over the years as different parts of the package look and work differently.

For instance, the File, Edit and Search menus offer a vertical list of options, then Layout goes horizontal, Print is vertical, then Tool is horizontal, then it's back to vertical with Adapt and so on. After selecting

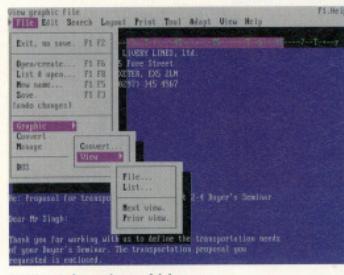
Open on the File menu, PC Write returns to its roots with a four line display at the top of the screen with prompt and function key actions.

Press F8 to get a directory listing and the function key commands change to things like Prior Series and Next Series.

The top of the screen looks messy with a status line, menu bar, button bar and ruler. The button bar enables quick access to various formatting commands, spelling checker and page preview facility. This is quite good.

Some of the menus are a bit obscure and it's difficult to work out what some of them do. For instance, what's All Features On, on the Adapt menu? You might be able to guess Push Typing on the Edit menu.

All my criticisms are aimed at ease of use and the user interface and if you can put up with it, PC Write is a very powerful package indeed. It's the only one, for instance, that can insert graphic images into the text. If features are more important than ease of use, get it.



PC Write is fast and powerful, but still awkward to use

tal, Print is vertical, then Tool goes horizontal, Print is vertical, then it's back to vertical with Adapt and so on. After selecting

Mind Reader

MIND Reader has been around for a few years, in fact, the date stamp on the files indicate that it hasn't been updated since 1988. It is very compact at just over 300k and this will make it popular with XT owners – it can even be run from a single low density 5.25in floppy.

It has a unique feature which sets it apart from the rest of the crowd, and this is that it tries to guess what you are going to type next and enters it for you. It sounds like a crazy idea, and for a reasonably good typist it is, but for two fingered hunt and pecker it can save a lot of work.

For instance, suppose you started to type a letter by saying: *Thank you for your invitation to the wedding...* You press T, h then a and up pops a window over your text with the phrase *Thank you for*. Press the hot key to signal your acceptance and the rest of the text is automatically inserted.

It doesn't just offer one suggestion, but several. Press

H (capital or lower case) and *Have, Had, Has been, Has been* and *Had been* are listed. Press the appropriate number to insert the phrase. The program learns, too, and if you more often than not use *Had been* it would put it at the top of the list in the default position.

A spelling checker is supplied with Mind Reader, but unlike other such utilities, this one works on the fly, as you type. Any mistakes are highlighted instantly as soon as you make them. You can go back and correct the misspelt word or ignore it.

On the negative side, when you type a full stop at the end of a sentence, Mind Reader automatically enters two spaces ready for the start of the next. Some people prefer this, but I don't and I couldn't work out how to disable it.

The other features, such as the on-the-fly spell checking and mind reading can be switched off. Files are also limited to 37k maximum.

Word Fugue 3

HERE'S another old favourite that has been around for quite a long time. Unlike some of the others, however, it has been constantly updated, so this release 3.0 is quite recent. It takes up about 1.5Mb of hard disk space.

When you run Word Fugue you see a fairly clean screen with three information lines at the top. The first lists a few basic functions, such as how to access the menu, the second is a status line which shows the name of the file being edited and other information, and the third line is a ruler which indicates the cursor position and tabs.

The menus are accessed by pressing Alt+F10 and are comprehensive. Just about every function you could wish for appears here. And the program features a limited degree of mouse control in that you can select menus and options with the pointer. In the text editing area the mouse simply moves the cursor.

Word Fugue has some nice features, such as word and line counters, and a spelling checker. When loading a file you can choose the document from a directory

listing, but what's more, files can have a comment line attached to them.

This means you can have a description with each file, such as *Letter to the bank manager* and so on. I know it's a cliché, but you really will wonder how you managed without it.

Other handy facilities include the ability to generate a table of contents.

This is achieved by placing a dot command in the margin rather like WordStar, so .TOC at the start of a line indicates that it is to be compiled into the contents.

And talking of WordStar, many of the keystrokes are identical, which makes for easy learning if you have ever come across these before.

Easy Word 6

EASY Word 6 aims to make wordprocessing as simple as possible, and right from the installation program you get the impression that this is a very professional piece of software.

It takes up about 1.2Mb of hard disk space, so it is not as compact as some wordprocessors, and a lot of this space must be due to the user interface.

Running the program you are presented with some very attractively designed screens and pop up menus. It really does look easy to use – just the sort of package you need. The Setup menu enables you to select a printer – there's a choice of 10 including HP LaserJet 3. Also on this menu, is Re-paginate, which is a bit weird.

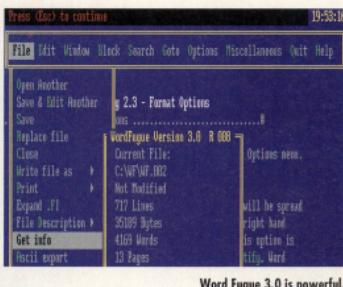
In fact, this whole program is a bit weird and although parts of it really are easy as its name suggests, some things are very strange. For instance, you can't name a document, but you can provide a description about 20 characters long. To find out what Easy Word has called a document you have to use List Document Dos Filenames on the Utilities menu.

If you start a new document or edit an existing one,

change your mind and decide not to keep it, there isn't an Abort or Abandon option. With a new document the only option is Save and Exit which creates the file on disk, and with an existing document the option you need is Restore Backup and Exit.

In every other wordprocessor in the world, pressing the Return key in the middle of a paragraph will take the remaining text down to the next line to start a new paragraph. Not Easy Word. Return just moves the cursor and doesn't affect the text. The key you need is F1, which in almost every other program displays help information. It's just not logical.

This package will one day probably be excellent, but not yet. The interface is superb, with a print preview facility, screen saver, timed backups and much more.



Word Fugue 3.0 is powerful, but also quite big



Easy Word has some great features, but also some awful ones

Features at a glance

	Galaxy Lite	Compact Writer	Mind Reader	Word Fugue	Easy Word	Breeze	PC Write
Supplier	EC Software	Premier Shareware	Classic Software	Premier Shareware	Springfield Publishing	Springfield Publishing	Shareware Marketing
Telephone	0484 460070	0689839533	0472 359957	0689 839533	0352 770049	0352 770049	0297 24088
Registration fee	£57.58	£17.63	£38.78	£52.88	£29.95	£29.99	£57.58
Environment	Dos	Dos	Dos	Dos	Dos	Dos	Dos
Disk space	503k	679k	311k	1.5Mb	1.2Mb	578k	3.5Mb
Macros	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Spell checker	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Word count	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Grammar check	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Max file size	Ram-based	Ram-based	37k	Ram-based	Disk-based	380k	Disk-based
File import	Ascii, WordStar	Ascii	Ascii	Ascii, WordStar	Ascii	Ascii	Ascii, WordStar, WordPerfect
Rating (5 max)	3	3	2	3	2	5	4

Many wordprocessors are available from shareware libraries, not just the specific ones mentioned here. The registration fees include VAT

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IF THE PROGRAM YOU REQUIRE IS NOT LISTED THEN GIVE US A CALL, WE HAVE MOST!

Code ACCOUNTS & FINANCE PROGRAMS

Code	Program Name	Description
A001	FREEWAY LEDGERMAN V2.0	Major system. Now with stock control
A002	FREEWAY PAYMENT V1.0	Latest payment. Bank to file. Very Good!
A003	FREEWAY CASHBOOK V1.0	Profit & loss. Bank rec. Excellent!
A004	FREEWAY PAYMENT V1.0	Latest payment. Bank to file. Very Good!
A005	PAGE CHECKER BOOK	Manage all your financial transactions
A006	OLIVE ACCOUNTS	Fully complete accounting system. Excellent!
A007	SURE ACCOUNTS V1.01	Fully integrated accounting system. Good!
A008	TOP ACCOUNTS V1.0	Accounting system. Good!
A009	HOME FINANCIAL COMPANION	UK personal accounts & budget planner
A010	CASHBOOK ACCOUNTS	Simple easy to use for small business home use
A011	PROFITABILITY	USA Quotations, Invoicing, Sales, Purchase, Stock Control, Sales Tax, Merchandise, Mail, Logos, Letters, Billing, Mailbox, Antiques, House, Food, Baby, Family, Pet, many more!

Code BUSINESS PROGRAMS

Code	Program Name	Description
B001	AS-EASY-AS-05 V.5	Take control of your spreadsheet
B002	MANUFACTURER V2.4	Complete UK sales system. Excellent!
B003	TOP ACCOUNTS V1.0	Accounting system. Good!
B004	TOP PAYMENT V1.0	Professional payment system
B005	SUPER FORMS V1.0	Powerful menu driven form generator
B006	PC-Form V1.0	Tidy, make professional forms generator
B007	FORMS V1.0	Form generator
B008	FILEFAX PRINTER	Let's you print your own custom designed pages.
B009	REPORTER V.8	Easy to use UK inventory & stock control program
B010	JAH HUNT V.2	Create impressive O/R's quickly
B011	TOP PAYMENT V1.0	Professional payment system
B012	SUPER FORMS V1.0	Powerful menu driven form generator
B013	EVOL V.4	Complete electronic sales prospecting software
B014	EVOL TEAM V.1	Custom pop up reminders, available program

Code CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

Code	Program Name	Description
C001	WIMPSTER V.1.0	3D virtual reality game. Wonderful!
C002	WIMPSTER V.1.0	3D virtual reality game. Wonderful!
C003	ZEPHEN V.4.0	Easy to use, full relational database
C004	PC-FILER V.1.0	Super easy version of our best selling database
C005	DATA MANAGER V.1.0	Relational database management program
C006	LABEL MASTER V.5	Very easy & easy to use address database
C007	LABEL MAGIC V.0.5	Excellent graphic labels generator
C008	SMART LABEL V.1	Powerful label manager
C009	TOP PAYMENT V1.0	Professional payment system
C010	RECORDS COLLECTOR	Catalogue your records & your CD's
C011	VIDEO COLLECTOR	Catalogue your video collection
C012	BOOK COLLECTOR	Catalogue your book collection
C013	TOP PAYMENT V1.0	Professional payment system. Very Good!
C014	HOME CONTENTS	Easy to use home contents valuation program
C015	CLUB MEMBERSHIP	Simple to use membership system

Code EDUCATION

Code	Program Name	Description
E001	PC-INTERACT V.1	Very good interactive computer tutorial program
E002	PC-FASTFY V.10	High quality interactive tutor. Simly the best!
E003	GCSE MATHS V.10	GCSE maths revision software
E004	GCSE PHYSICS TUTOR	Physics GCSE revision package
E005	GCSE CHEMISTRY TUTOR	Chemistry GCSE revision package
E006	GCSE BIOLOGY TUTOR	Biology GCSE revision package
E007	GCSE HISTORY TUTOR	GCSE history revision package
E008	GCSE GEOGRAPHY TUTOR	GCSE geography revision package
E009	GCSE MATHS TUTOR	GCSE maths revision package
E010	GCSE PHYSICS TUTOR	GCSE physics revision package
E011	GCSE CHEMISTRY TUTOR	GCSE chemistry revision package
E012	GCSE HISTORY TUTOR	GCSE history revision package
E013	GCSE GEOGRAPHY TUTOR	GCSE geography revision package
E014	GCSE MATHS REVISION	Another top class educational title from Apogee
E015	SPELLBOW V.10	Super spelling title that works. Top class!
E016	TOP SPELLING V.10	Super spelling title that works. Top class!
E017	TOP SPELLING V.10	Super spelling title that works. Top class!
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H005	SOULIE'S PCX CL	

The human's guide to comms

Ok, so you've got your first modem and you managed to dig out some comms software from that old pile of dusty coverdisks. Now what?

Buying the right hardware and software forms only half the equation. This month we show you how to actually put it all together and get on line.

ASSUMING you have installed the comms software and connect the modem you are now in a position to try it out. If you haven't yet installed the software or connected the modem, I strongly urge you to read the manuals and do it now. To explore the intricacies of every piece of comms software and every modem available would take a book, rather than a series.

The first thing you need to do is configure the comms software. Since so many different kinds are available I shall use the Terminal application supplied with Windows to demonstrate the techniques involved. You should then know what to look for in your own software in order to configure that.

Configuring the software

Load up the terminal program, which normally lives in the Accessories window and looks like a computer with a phone in front. After a short pause you should be presented with a blank white window. This is the place on screen where you will communicate with your modem and the online systems.

Before we can go any further we need to tell the pack-

age which serial port the modem is connected to. If you have an internal card modem you will probably have gone through some steps in the manual known as configuring the comm port which should tell you which port it is on.

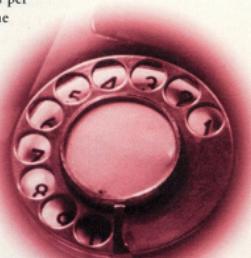
External modem users simply need to look at the back of the computer to see which slot the modem is plugged into. In Windows Terminal, press Alt+S, then C to bring up the comms configuration box.

At the bottom right of the dialog box is a box labelled Connector, showing a list of comm ports (Comm1, Comm2). Use the mouse to select the port to which your modem is attached.

Next, consult the modem manual to find out what speeds it supports. The speed is normally specified in baud, which represents the number of bits per second that the modem can send down the phone.

On the screen, click the 2400 button in the baud rate box if your modem can handle speeds of between 2400 baud and 9600. If it can't go that fast select the applicable speed. Windows Terminal is not the fastest comms package in the world and tends to have problems with fast modems, which is why for the time being we shall only go as fast as 2400 baud, even with those modems that can go faster.

By this point the modem is ready to talk with the computer, but not quite fit enough



Continuing his series on communications, Peter Wright explores how to get connected

Bulletin boards

THE best places to try out your new found skills are bulletin boards. These are online systems run by hobbyists like yourself, usually for free. All you need to do is get a bulletin board number and log on.

Of course, even though the usage of the bulletin board is free, the phone call is not, so beware dialling bulletin boards in far off lands, or boards whose numbers begin 0891 and so on.

Bulletin board numbers are freely available and can be found in most popular computer magazines, usually in the classified ads section at the back. Also, each month we will be doing a mini review of one of the better bulletin boards around the country – the first is on the next page.

"But what do I need to know to call a board. What can I do when I have called it?" I hear you cry. As far as technical knowledge is concerned you need only know what we have described in this article plus how to upload and download.

Bulletin boards typically contain hundreds of shareware and public domain programs for their users to download (transfer from their computer to yours).

Downloading is a special feature of most comms packages, including Windows Terminal. However, before you can download you need to

choose a download protocol. We covered protocols last month, so I won't go into great detail about them again.

Select the best protocol that your comms software supports – remember ZModem is best, YModem is OK, and XModem will suffice if you really have no other choice. You will need to set this up in the comms software before going online. The bulletin board itself will normally ask which protocol to use whenever you elect to download something.

There are also some points of etiquette that you need to remember about bulletin boards though. First of all they are there to provide a voluntary, friendly service. They are not bottomless software pits and they are not there solely for your use.

Many boards ask that you upload one file for every 8 or 10 you download. Surprisingly a lot of people moan about this, but without it the boards would never grow and would thus not be of interest to anyone. All bulletin boards support messaging as well, areas where you can converse with people all over the country – or even the world – about almost anything. There are two rules to remember when messaging: Be polite and stay on topic.

Board of the Month - Sound & Vision BBS 0932 252323

FROM very humble beginnings on a single BBC Model B computer, Sound & Vision BBS has grown to become one of the biggest in the country. It now has four phone lines, each linked to a 386 computer, and each of these is linked to a central 486 machine with over three gigabytes of disk space (3,072 Mb).

The underlying theme of the board is, as the name suggests, sound and vision. There are thousands of public domain and shareware files online, many of them either GIF picture files or sound players and various sound files.

Most are provided by a powerful multi-CD system, capable of allowing users to download files from any of the six CDs online. That's a further six gigabytes or so of storage.

Mail freaks are also amply catered for since the board is linked into most of the major international mail networks, including Internet, which is a phenomenal network of computers in various businesses and

universities spread all over the globe. Among its members are CompuServe, Yale University, MIT and most universities in this country.

We will be covering mail networks later in the series but, for now, what this means is that Sound and Vision has roughly 70 megabytes of messages online, covering an incredibly diverse range of subjects.

Among these are, of course, computers (programming, using, playing games on and so on) as well as more weird ones such as McDonald's food, martial arts and job opportunities.

Sound and Vision is initially free to use, but to gain access to the CDs and Internet requires a membership fee of £10 a year and a further £7.50 a year to use Internet. This pays for the hardware and phone bills associated with the board picking up your mail and so on.

Sound & Vision is run by Rob Barth in Weybridge and can be accessed on 0932-252323.

yet to dial someone up. To check everything is working, click the OK button and type AT on to the blank window. Don't forget to press Return and you should see the cursor move down one line and the word OK appear.

If nothing at all appeared, including the AT you typed, check everything we have just done, and make sure the modem is turned on and connected to the computer properly.

AT is a command from the Hayes modem control language, a system supported by nearly all (99.9%) of modern modems.

Using a comms package is not like typing on a wordprocessor window or a Dos command line.

The keys you press are sent to the modem and not direct to the screen. Text will only appear on screen if the modem sends it.

When you connect to a bulletin board, for instance, the board should echo back every character pressed enabling you to see what you are typing.

If the modem is not connected to a bulletin board it will naturally echo text back on its own.

In order to connect to a bulletin board there are still areas to set up.

Press Alt+S, then C again to get back to the communications setup dialog box.

Data bits, Stop bits and Parity settings now need to be defined. These all refer to the more technical aspects of sending data down a phone line.

There are really only two settings that need to be used. To connect to a bulletin board you need to set the Data bits to 8, the Stop bits to 1 and the Parity to None. If, on the other hand, to connect to an old vewdata service like Prestel, or certain commercial systems such as CompuServe, set the Data bits to 7, Stop bits to 1 and Parity to Even.

There are abbreviations for these two settings. Bulletin board settings as described above are called 8N1. The other settings are called 7E1. For the time being set the bulletin board setting 8N1 (8 Data bits, 1 Stop bit, No Parity).

The next thing to set up is flow control. On the whole, this can be set to None. If, however, you have a

fast modem (9600 or above) and plan to use it to its maximum, you will need to select either hardware or software flow control.

These options regulate the flow of data between computer and modem. Hardware flow control is best but not all modem cables are equipped to handle it. On the other hand, software control (usually called Xon/Xoff) tends to slow down data transfer rate.

If your comms package starts giving *Serial buffer overflow* messages you will need to enable flow control, whatever the modem speed.

Finally, the terminal emulation needs to be set. Most bulletin board system use special characters to represent certain characters on screen or to produce colours and so on. To see these you need to tell the comms package to accept ANSI text. The alternative is straight text, commonly referred to as TTY mode.

If you select this and log on to an ANSI board your screen will soon fill up with strange hieroglyphics. In Windows Terminal select the Terminal emulation item on the Settings menu (Alt+S) and click on the ANSI option.

You're now ready to breathe life into the modem. Click on the OK button again to return to the terminal window. When there, enter ATDT followed by your own phone number.

The ATDT command tells the modem to tone dial a number. In many modems, failing to put the T after the ATD bit will result in the modem *click* dialling. Press Return, if you haven't already and the modem will leap into life, usually indicated by flashing lights on the front and an audible beep-beep-beep as it dials.

After a further short pause a message should appear saying either *Busy* or *No Carrier* depending on how sophisticated the modem is.

Congratulations, you just made your first modem call, albeit to an engaged number (your own). The *No Carrier* message is something that you will grow to find quite reassuring. It says that the modem is no longer talking to the phone line or another modem and that it has hung up.

Some modems display this message if the number dialled is busy. All modems display this message whenever a call ends and the modem hangs up.

● *Next month we will take a look at the cost saving measures to keep those online costs down.* ■

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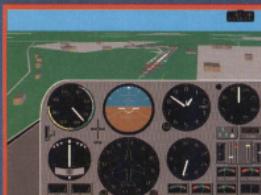
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Light Aircraft Simulator incorporates a unique cockpit feature - the off-screen Virtual Flight Panel - which increases the effective flight panel size, allowing instruments and systems to be realistically sized and spaced - with occasional access facilities located off the normal display screen. A key activated Raise/Lower/Slide action, instantly moves all parts of the Flight Panel into view when required, simulating the pilots need to occasionally glance and check certain facilities. The forward Out-of-Cockpit view is sized by a similar process. All instruments and Systems are accurate, fully operational and include failure modes. The Virtual Flight Panels for LAS-VFR and the optional IFR expansion are depicted here.



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Service with a smile

*Rachel Ashworth
takes a look at
the package
claiming to make
any vicar quicker*

WHETHER you're up in the pulpit or down in the pews it doesn't take a prophet to work out that it takes a lot longer than the hour-long service to plan its format. In fact, it can often take most of the week before.

With the average minister's duties nowadays it is

not surprising that most of them feel overworked, not to mention under paid.

Although the time they devote to planning a service is all in the call of duty, it would make life a whole lot easier if they had a system to economise that time. Enter WorshipMaster.

HAVE you ever sat through an hour-long service that feels like three hours? The same clichés, verses, prayers and slow hymns.

It's hardly surprising that a lot of people don't bounce out of bed every Sunday morning, dancing to church singing *Morning Has Broken*.

We can't tar all churches with the same brush though, but it would improve the general church's image to jazz up the form of service. If all boils down to who plans the service, which rests on the minister.

Aside from visiting their members, planning as well as attending church events and representing the church as a body, they also have to plan their weekly two Sunday services. Among all this it is vital for them to retain their calm exterior and remain living examples of the Christian faith.

It seems to me that they are under the same pressure as business people without the professional secretarial and administrative support.

Oxford University Press claim that clerics need fear no more as press button technology has come to the rescue. At last there is opportunity for them to not only

save time planning their weekly service but to creatively add variety to each meeting.

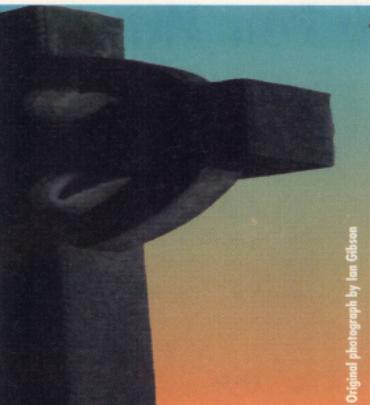
WorshipMaster claims to provide ministers with all the resource material they need in order to plan an exciting and relevant worship programme. Creator of the package, the Rev Tim Anderson of St Mary's church, Reigate told *PC Home*: "Our goal is to assist those planning worship in churches; to make worship more creative and to make it easier to include a wider range of material".

The package allows ministers, musicians and all those involved in planning worship to decide on suitable texts, readings and hymns for specific Sundays of the year and choose from around 1,000 carefully selected hymns and songs.

The first point to be raised from this is it seemingly detracts from the element of faith involved in planning a service. A clergyman is supposed to be a channel for God to speak to the church, reflected in the format of a service.

Having said this, though, God reveals himself in mysterious ways so revealing His plan through a com-

Reference	First Line	Number
Psalm 32:8	Lead us, kindly Father, lead us	587
Psalm 34:3	Thou art my Shepherd, I know	588
Psalm 34:4	Tell me, I sin so常 and yet	589
Psalm 34:5	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:6	I will sacrifice the same	92
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Psalm 34:276	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:277	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:278	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:279	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:280	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:281	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:282	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:283	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:284	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:285	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:286	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:287	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:288	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:289	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:290	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:291	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:292	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:293	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:294	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:295	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:296	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:297	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:298	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:299	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:300	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:301	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:302	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:303	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:304	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:305	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:306	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:307	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:308	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:309	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:310	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:311	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:312	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:313	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:314	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:315	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:316	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:317	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:318	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:319	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:320	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:321	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:322	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:323	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:324	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:325	I will sacrifice the same	92
Psalm 34:326		



Original photograph by Ian Gibson

puter program should be perfectly feasible. The package not only relieves priests of the pressure to find variety for their services but allows them to create and print the actual service sheets with ease.

This move in itself should solve the problem of churchgoers hurriedly leafing through the pages of a service book to locate where the vicar is up to.

With the service laid out clearly the congregation are more likely to concentrate on what is being preached than where to find the verses.

Donning the cloth

After following the tutorial example I decided to don the white collar and plan a service around the theme of Father God. Not knowing which song to start the ball rolling, I scrolled through the list provided and picked out the one with the most relevant title, *Father God I Wonder*.

After this initial choice it's a knock-on effect until the final printout. You need to specify the category mode – such as prayers, hymns or reading – to select from the wealth of stored items, decide on the central theme for the service and WorshipMaster takes over.

In order to find a relevant bible reading to support the song the user simply clicks on the biblical option and a list of verses with first lines matching that of the chosen song appear.

If time isn't on the vicar's side, and he knows the book the verse is in but not its exact location, the quick search option is invaluable. Obviously he can choose more than one reading, with each one selected saved for the final printout.

To conclude my service I tapped in the theme, *Father God*, under the topics index to be presented with a wealth of choruses and hymns. Resetting the filter mode I selected two prayers and finally arranged my service into the order that I would want to present it to a congregation.

In a matter of 10 minutes I had created a service including three bible readings and choruses and two hymns and prayers. A simple to the point service, guaranteed not to drag with an interesting selection of items.

The program is based on words of wisdom from ministers of all denominations. Before the package was cre-

Shareware alternatives

AS well as commercial products like WorshipMaster there are a number of shareware packages available to test out for free.

We scoured through the libraries and came up with the following:

God's Word for Windows

THIS easy-to-use bible reference program is a slick little Windows package that helps the user study the bible more effectively by making it more accessible.

Based on the King James version it allows you to search for verses containing a given word, group of words or concentrate on a given topic.

These procedures can be limited to searching through just one book of the bible or through all the books. Once the location to find the topic and the topic itself is selected all relevant verses are displayed for viewing individually.

The seemingly thorough package covers all topics from creation to adultery, and at any time the displayed verses can be printed out.

Church Membership Tracking System

A LARGE congregation requires organisation. Like any other institution bad management results in disorder and dissatisfied members. To avoid the tensions of a mismanaged church an

ated the Liturgical Commission wanted to produce a denomination-free book containing a wide choice of prayers, hymns and reading for different types of services.

As the idea developed though, it became more feasible for it to be presented in the form of a computer package. Its contents reflect the variety of contributions made while work was in progress. For instance, the notes option was requested by various contributors allowing their personal notes to be saved on disk.

Church benefit

The true test is with the clergy themselves, though, and whether they will be convinced enough to be converted.

Some might argue that the computer is replacing the role of God in deciding the form of Sunday worship. But if a vicar is relieved of a few hours' work, enabling him to channel his spare time to other ecclesiastical activities, it will be to the benefit of the church as a whole.

Of course, if the clergy are using the package properly, there is also no fear of the congregation sitting through the same service two weeks running. ■

extremely efficient secretary is required or better still an efficient system.

The Professional Church Membership Tracking System claims to cater for the problems raised by a large membership. It sections off into categories including membership, visitation, fund accounting, donations and attendance.

Each category sub divides into the individual member's personal details. It is possible to find out what special talents a member has – for example, baby-sitting, coffee rota and choir singing.

Despite the heavy American influence this package would be a very useful tool to relieve that overworked church secretary, as well as checking that church duties are evenly distributed.

Apostle Paul Tutorial

HOW much have you remembered from your Sunday school days? This shareware program is the ideal way to test what you picked up about one of the major characters out of the bible.

It offers a wide selection of topics about St Paul, ranging from his preparation for mission all the way through to his imprisonment.

Presented in the form of multi-choice, matching the answers to the questions and true/false format it is ideal for bible study leaders who want variety in their meetings.

PC HOME PROFILE

PRODUCT	WorshipMaster
PRICE	£111.63 (£95 ex VAT)
SUPPLIER	Electronic Publishing, Oxford University Press, Walton Street, Oxford OX2 6DP
TEL	0865 56767
FOR	<i>Devoid of any distracting Americanisms, great time-saver</i>
AGAINST	<i>Over-priced, especially for an underpaid vicar</i>

Keeping in touch

WETHER by phone or in person, keeping in touch with customers is vital to all businesses, big or small. Formerly affordable only by corporate users, dedicated databases for managing clients, sales prospects, suppliers and other contacts, are now procurable under more modest budgets.

Like the secretary they supplant, they remember names and addresses, can remind you of appointments and phone calls, write letters and take notes.

Many small businesses and home workers still reliant on an address book, diary and foolscap pad to organise their sales calls. They may believe the alternative is either spending a lot of money on bespoke software or spending a lot of time developing a system from a standard database. Well, fret no more, off-

the-shelf dedicated contact management software is now available at reasonable prices.

All contact management software should offer the same core functions. The essentials include a name and address database, linked appointment diary, linked notepad for recording the outcome of telephone calls or visits, a things-to-do list, and a report generator.

It's useful, if you have a modem, to be able to dial the contact currently on-screen automatically. It's useful too, to have a wordprocessor mailmerge function available. And to be able to look up contacts under more than one index.

Both programs examined here can do all this and more besides.



Contacts Manager 3

TENDERING a worthwhile suite of facilities in addition to the essential operations, Contacts Manager 3's extras include mouse support, a calculator, a clutch of conversion tables, loan analyser, bank cheque printer, quick phone function from anywhere in Dos, and a separate UK dialling code database by BT.

It can establish, and switch between, up to 25 separate contacts databases – all with different field names if you like. A 64-colour palette, fine-edged menu borders and special fonts add finesse to a VGA display.

Contact Manager 3 can be made resident for immediate access from any other program and can make up to four other programs of your choice act as TSRs (terminate and stay resident programs).

A single records screen provides 24 data entry fields, including three pop-up memo fields which each allow unlimited free-form text entry for notes. Usefully, all fields can be renamed to suit your way of working.

Each record has an associated Dates screen where you can enter one or more oneoff or annually recurring deadlines. Of the three dates schedules available, the CheckDate Advisor is a particularly useful feature as it can also be run independently, including from your

AUTOEXEC.BAT file, popping up to give advance notice of forthcoming deadlines.

Whereas the Dates screen is linked to a particular record, the Appointment Diary is a separate file, so diary entries are independent. Dates are valid up to the year 1999 – after that you'll need to buy a program update.

The ThingsToDo List is also independent of the contacts records and lets you change the priority of any item, the ranking of all other items being readjusted automatically.

You can also assign an expected time estimate for each task, from five minutes (probably simpler just to do the thing) to three years and the cumulative time estimate is calculated and displayed.

There is no excuse for losing information. A simple Find works on the first few letters in the six sort fields, a Key Word Search looks for a word or letter combination anywhere in the record – including text fields (and therefore takes longer) and a Selective Browser lets you view a subset of contacts on the basis of selection criteria in any or all fields.

As well as printing envelopes, compliment slips and

It's not what you know, it's who you know, and even that can now be computerised economically.
James Taylor makes contact with management software

Contact Name		Classification		Marketing & Public Relations	
Business Name	Address	Title	Initials	First Name	Surname
SOULING FINGER		Mr	AS	Mike	
Address	Postcode	Salutation		Editor & Proprietor	
Aspects	City				
Position	Country				
Business Address					
Purple Fingers The Old Abattoirs, Sodenham Hall Lancashire Warrington WA2 8JN					
Business Address					
Other Address					
Telephone No. 01253 3132					
Fax / Telex					
Further contacts (25 max): Richard Blakely, Advertising Manager last meeting after 12.00, Trade Journal: target market - Computer Hardware writers, 94...					
E-mail: richard.blakely@purplefingers.co.uk					

The single screen in Contacts Manager 3 allows all essential information to be recorded. All fields can be renamed

Contact Tasks Dates Write Reports Maintenance Preferences	
Wednesday, 17 March 1993	
1 (FIRST NAME) (SURNAMES)	
COMPANY NAME	
BUSINESS ADDRESS 1	
BUSINESS ADDRESS 2	
BUSINESS ADDRESS 3	
BUSINESS ADDRESS 4	
BUSINESS ADDRESS 5	
Most of the contact-management programs available are American, and therefore use a different date format (MM/DD/YY) to ours (DD/MM/YY). From single characters (like page number formats, and US spellings of y (to be next to customers) to actual US formats (like the date and time in the linked appointment calendar, 08/06/93). CONTACTS NUMBER 3 correctly uses the UK format.	
CONTACTS NUMBER 3 correctly uses the UK format.	
CINCHHOME/CONTACTS/1	
11-May-93 11:00am 12-May-93 11:00am 13-May-93 11:00am 14-May-93 11:00am 15-May-93 11:00am 16-May-93 11:00am 17-May-93 11:00am 18-May-93 11:00am 19-May-93 11:00am 20-May-93 11:00am 21-May-93 11:00am 22-May-93 11:00am 23-May-93 11:00am 24-May-93 11:00am 25-May-93 11:00am 26-May-93 11:00am 27-May-93 11:00am 28-May-93 11:00am 29-May-93 11:00am 30-May-93 11:00am 31-May-93 11:00am 01-Jun-93 11:00am 02-Jun-93 11:00am 03-Jun-93 11:00am 04-Jun-93 11:00am 05-Jun-93 11:00am 06-Jun-93 11:00am 07-Jun-93 11:00am 08-Jun-93 11:00am 09-Jun-93 11:00am 10-Jun-93 11:00am 11-Jun-93 11:00am 12-Jun-93 11:00am 13-Jun-93 11:00am 14-Jun-93 11:00am 15-Jun-93 11:00am 16-Jun-93 11:00am 17-Jun-93 11:00am 18-Jun-93 11:00am 19-Jun-93 11:00am 20-Jun-93 11:00am 21-Jun-93 11:00am 22-Jun-93 11:00am 23-Jun-93 11:00am 24-Jun-93 11:00am 25-Jun-93 11:00am 26-Jun-93 11:00am 27-Jun-93 11:00am 28-Jun-93 11:00am 29-Jun-93 11:00am 30-Jun-93 11:00am 31-Jun-93 11:00am 01-Jul-93 11:00am 02-Jul-93 11:00am 03-Jul-93 11:00am 04-Jul-93 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► fax sheets, Contacts Manager 3 also supports wordprocessing, mailmerging, and mailmerge export files for use with other wordprocessors.

Equipped with most essential features, the wordprocessor will export and import Ascii files to and from other wordprocessors and let you maintain a documents database to keep track of letters written, with the documents themselves stored individually as Ascii files.

The spell checker claims over 100,000 English language words and a word count. As well as A4, Contacts Manager 3 can format output for A5 and pocket diary

DataSel Gold

ORIGINALLY an American program, now anglicised for the UK, DataSel Gold provides for a different set of priorities. It doesn't, for example, have quite the same speedy reactions as Contacts Manager 3 which allows rapid movement around its functions using instant hotkeys making it ideal to record things as they happen. DataSel Gold is, though, more *proactive* in that you can manipulate data in more flexible ways.

For instance, you get a further 16 variable-length, user-defined custom fields, disposed on a second screen, which can be defined as character, numeric or date, and enabling you to qualify contacts in greater detail when establishing selection criteria.

Predefined categories – Call, Meet, Prep, Send – are available for appointments and to-do entries which speeds up input and makes subsequent retrieval easier.

The Prep option is short for *prepare* and lets you schedule time for priority projects or preparation for an imminent appointment. If you schedule a time, DataSel Gold will check for, and refuse, conflicting appointments.

Entries can also be classified as Pending or History and either or both can be included on reports. A useful feature is that appointments can be recurring, on a daily, weekly, monthly or yearly basis.

All records are stored in *lists*, an initially confusing description that equates to (unlimited) multiple databases. Different lists can have different custom fields if required: You can also have different information in identical format lists, when you can easily move individual records from one list to another, or merge two lists to produce a third.

Two forms of searching are provided. Turbo Search looks in the standard index fields, offering either an exact match or a scroll list of close matches. Advanced Search lets you define selection criteria based on any (or every) field. Advanced Searches can be saved to be used again.

As well as labels, envelopes and mailmerge, which covers custom as well as standard fields, DataSel Gold's built-in wordprocessor supports limited text enhancement, side margins (only) and text moving, copying, deleting and import/export. The maximum number of characters that can be printed on a single line is 70. There's a UK spell checker, sent separately on registration. When you've printed a letter,



PC HOME PROFILE

PRODUCT	CONTACTS MANAGER 3
Price	£91.65 inc VAT (£78 ex VAT)
Supplier	Wiltch Computer Sciences, 34 Runford Court, Milton Keynes MK5 7BB
Tel	0908 677726
FOR	Date reminder, dialling code database, TSR operation
AGAINST	No index field, no contact logging

ACTION SCREEN 1		ID # 411
FIRST	Sir Hugh	LASTNAME: JAMPSON
TITLE	Editor & Proprietor	
COMPANY	MOVING FINGER	
ADDRESS 1	Purple Press	
ADDRESS 2	100 High Street, Gobham Hall	
TOWN	Lace Chequers	POST CODE: B12 5JN
COUNTY	Worcestershire	STATE CODE: 000001
TYPE	Prospect	PHONE: 01251 3132
		MOVED: 11/02/93

PHONE	NAME	RELATIONSHIP	COMMENT	Telephone	Mobile
Fax	Sir Hugh	Editor	Richard Sticker, Adm. Mosa Trade	01251 3132	0783 222200

[File] Help [Edit] Screen 2 [Ctrl] Previous/Next [Exit]

DataSel Gold's Action screen 1 provides crucial information for an unlimited number of contacts

ACTION SCREEN 2		ID # 411
Sir Hugh JAMPSON of MOVING FINGER Lace Chequers, Worcestershire		
BUSINESS	Press & Publication	DATE: 08/08/93
INDUSTRY	Advertising & Public Relations	DATE BUSINESS: 08/08/93
PHONE	01251 3132	TIMEWORK: 0.00
SEARCHES		LAST MONTH: 0.00
STATUS		
REFERENCE		
		MAP

Add	Calendar	Print Note	Telephone	Mobile
Edit	Quick Entry	Notepad	Set Tag	Close
Undo	History		Order	Delete

[File] Help [Edit] Screen 2 [Ctrl] Previous/Next [Exit]

You can create a second DataSel Gold Action screen with up to 16 extra fields customised to suit your business

whether to one contact or many, made a call, or attended a meeting, DataSel Gold puts a *History* entry in the relevant contact's calendar to note the event.

A Quick Entry facility also allows date- and time-stamped comments to be added to the calendar. A separate individual Notepad for each contact is provided for information which is not date sensitive. ■

PC HOME PROFILE

PRODUCT	DATASEL GOLD
Price	£116.33 inc VAT (£99 ex VAT)
Supplier	LTS, Haydon House, Alcester Road, Studley, Warwickshire B80 7AN
Tel	0386 792617
FOR	Extra user-defined fields, formatted calendar, versatile sorting and searching, contact logging (history)
AGAINST	Unusual menu structure, limited output formatting

Which one for you?

BOTH programs run in 640k memory and need a hard disk. They have good manuals and offer UK telephone support, DataSel Gold's being free. There is a free evaluation disk available for Contacts Manager 3.

Both do a good job of managing sales and other contacts records, and which is best depends on your priorities. If you have lots of free text records to keep, choose Contacts Manager 3. Choose this too, if you want to be able to run other programs without leaving the contact manager, if you want slightly more versatile wordprocessor formatting or if you need the dialling code database.

Choose DataSel Gold to categorise and manipulate contacts more easily, perform complex searches, produce classified contact histories or if you have a lot of recurring appointments – a sales round, for example.

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COMPTON'S FAMILY DOCTOR 47

COMPTON'S INTERACTIVE MPC

ENCYCLOPEDIA FOR WINDOWS 235

DINOSAUR ADVENTURE 50

KODAK PHOTO-CD 35

MACMILLAN DICTIONARY FOR

CHILDREN FOR WINDOWS 45

MICROSOFT CINEMANIA FOR WINDOWS 48

MICROSOFT ENCARTA MULTIMEDIA

ENCYCLOPEDIA FOR WINDOWS 205

MICROSOFT MULTIMEDIA SDK WIN 225

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NEON PHOTO GALLERY 200

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LOTUS 123 5.4 340

LOTUS 123 WINDOWS 275

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ORGANIZE YOUR BUSINESS

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The complete database for organising a small or medium sized business, this program offers to catalogue and record just about every piece of information your business needs or collects over time. It's fully configurable to suit your particular requirements with selectable record fields, adjustable field lengths, home-brew report formats and extensive but easily handled user-defined indexing facilities. This package is well worth evaluating before looking at any of the more expensive options. Requires Hard Disc.

SILOCALC

Order Code: 15250
Total Disks: 1



This simple program is designed to make physical checks on the tonnage of dry materials stored in a silo, based solely on a single depth measurement and compared against a conversion chart. If you don't know what this means, you don't need SiloCalc. On the other hand, for those who do, this must be the only program available capable of this.

LIBRARIUS

Order Code: 15480
Total Disks: 1



This is a comprehensive Windows-based cataloguing system for printed and audio-visual material or, to put it another way, your own personal library of books, magazines, articles, music, videos or whatever else 'media' products you may wish to catalogue, categorise and quickly locate through its search database. User defined key words, graphed statistical information, context sensitive help and flexible search options all go to make a well presented, professional and affordable solution to any cataloguing problems you may have. Requires Hard Disc.

BILL BOARD VGA II

Order Code: 15000
Total Disks: 2



Bill Board is a simple colouring book with a difference, it has an animated character that sings (yes sings) and talks and has his own synthesizer keyboard with animated singers. The voice is absolutely brilliant as he chatters to the kids while they are drawing and colouring in. When the picture is complete Bill will juggle up the pieces and make a block puzzle for the kids to solve. There are ten pictures in the shareware version to colour and play with and many Soundblaster samples to amuse your children whilst they play. There are four instruments for the music mode and there is even a simple drawing mode. You can draw on top of the pictures provided or clear the screen and draw your own pictures. Words are not enough to describe this stunning piece of

shareware. You will use it and register within days, we guarantee it!

Soundblaster and mouse are optional but what fun if you have them!!! Requires Hard Disc & VGA.

PC TUTOR

Order Code: 1000
Total Disks: 1



The PC TUTOR is an essential program for all readers who wish to explore the potential of their computers further. It runs well on all graphics adapter types and has no special hardware requirements. PC TUTOR takes you step by step through the intricacies of the IBM PC and MS-DOS. By completing each section you will learn about the keyboard and all the special keys such as INS and DEL. You may then proceed through exercises in computer terminology which explain jargon words. The final exercises introduce you to MS-DOS, its basic commands and what it is supposed to do for you on a day to day basis. After the basic level you will cover more advanced commands which enable you to manipulate information and make good use of storage such as floppy disks. Finally, batch files are covered in detail explaining why we use these compact command files and what each batch command does. All in all a very well composed program which is simple to use and educational.

GRAPHICS WORKSHOP

Order Code: 1620
Total Disks: 1



Graphics workshop is a shareware leader in the area of image manipulation. Programs

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of shareware

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such as this are essential for anybody building a library of scanned images, gem drawing files or other formats. The program can load any of a dozen formats and convert the image to any other output style. This means being able to take images received from a Macintosh and save them in a format known as PCX which programs such as CorelDRAW can import. Support is provided for super VGA users and facilities for image smoothing and cropping are also provided. Again this is a stunning offering through the shareware concept and one which I am sure will prove to be popular. Requires Hard Disc.

NEOPAINT

Order Code: 10460
Total Disks: 2

This latest version now handles over 300 different printers for all your professional needs. It is so good that we now use it for all our drawing and image manipulation for the artwork you see in this section of the magazine. It has a colour stamp facility that allows you to create your own images to be copied onto an existing screen without wiping out the background. It has more facilities than the package we used to use and costs a fraction of the price. It includes all the standard tools, of which most of them work in Zoom mode. It can invert, flip, rotate, scale, stretch, smudge and anything else you might want it to do. It includes PCX and GIF in its file formats, works with Hercules and above in 2, 16 or 256 colours and can print to laser or dot matrix printer. You can convert colour images to 256 grey scales and work with multiple images but best of all, it doesn't need Windows to run which means it is easy to install and use. This is the best package to become available on Shareware in a long time. There are already loads more fonts available with more becoming available every week. Uses every mode EXCEPT CGA. Requires Hard Disc.

NEOPAINT

Order Code: 14760
Total Disks: 1

The authors of NeoPaint, the best selling paint package for DOS, have now produced another winner, NeoShow. It allows a fresh way to use PCX and GIF images from your paint program and/or scanner utility! NeoShow allows you to create computer based presentations for

meetings, sales or just plain fun. You can include WIPE, DISSOLVE and other transition effects to produce smooth and professional exhibitions. Applications range from displaying scanned photo's, to self running point of sale exhibits, to illustrating a lecture.

PCX SUPERTOOLS

Order Code: 15440
Total Disks: 1

The PCX SuperTools collection of programs and utilities is designed to aid the manipulation and processing of industry standard PCX images. The PCX Toolbox allows you to view, scale, crop, dither, adjust and print your image files quickly and easily from the mouse-aware pull down menus. The registered package brings with it the memory resident tools, which include a screen capture program and a screen print TSR for output direct to a laser or dot-matrix printer. Requires CGA.

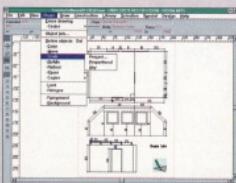
PRINT PARTNER

Order Code: 15450
Total Disks: 1

If you have ever needed to design and print banners, signs, posters, greeting cards or calendars, Print Partner is the program to choose. It offers all of these output styles and more with printer drivers for all the popular models and a collection of interesting fonts from which to select your output. You can also edit and create monochrome pictures for printing on your design, and it's all really easy to use. The program even includes a print-test option so you can be sure you have a suitable printer driver selected. Requires CGA.

TOMMYSOFT CAD/DRAW

Order Code: 15290
Total Disks: 2



This extensive Windows CAD/com drawing and painting package from Germany has numerous powerful features which sets it firmly into the professional bracket. The intelligent screen layout and accurate drawing tools make for a sophisticated program costing many times less than a comparable commercial system. Advanced features include a construction command capable of simple tasks like dropping a perpendicular to complexities such as fitting a circle within two lines. It also offers object libraries, hatching, trimming and support for up to 256 object layers. Requires Hard Disc.

ORGANIZE YOUR HOME

Order Code: 15280
Total Disks: 1

Another in the "Organize Your" series, this version offers you complete control over how you record details on your personal and domestic belongings. All this information will be needed in the event of a warranty claim, theft, damage, maintenance renewal or insurance claim and will worth having on hand. Although ready-configured for immediate use, it allows you to choose data field names and lengths, reporting formats and indexing methods so that it's just right for your particular circumstances. Requires Hard Disc.

PUZZLER

Order Code: 14580
Total Disks: 1

Those who regularly complete the Times crossword within an half hour won't need Puzzler. On the other hand, if you're like me and never seem to solve the last three or four clues, this word searcher and anagram solver may be just the job. It's a simple interface but the dictionary seems to be impressively large. Certainly it's good enough for completing the crossword in the local rag or the tabloid press.

1993TRIS

Order Code: 15300
Total Disks: 1



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This is yet another game based on the Tetris theme, but with a radically different playing method and goal. You need to make three-in-a-row in any direction to remove these pieces from play. Rather than shapes falling, 1993 Iris always drops squares comprising four coloured tiles which slide into any gaps when they hit bottom. This makes for a challenging alternative, plus there are a number of 'tools' available which you must figure how to use yourself. It takes a while to get into this game, but once you've got the hang of the rudiments it starts to get you hooked. Requires EGA.

BACK TO THE FOREST

Order Code: 15530

Total Disks: 1



One of Copysoft's most popular games with Special Agent 'Skunny Hardnuf' as the main character. Gamers can choose between playing Skunny or Rosie, his model girlfriend, to combat the evil King Toad who is using all the crazed insects in the forest to gain control. He has trapped all Skunny's friends to bait Skunny into the forest to finally finish him off. You have to jump on the insects while collecting all the health giving food and drink left by your friends before they were captured. You need to find the health nut on each level which will give you special powers to kill King Toad. There are a number of puzzles to solve to complete the levels which help add to the gameplay of this Parallax scrolling game with excellent graphics and sound effects. Requires VGA.

BIOMENACE

Order Code: 15235

Total Disks: 1



Apogee's latest release, Bio Menace, will appeal straight away to all Duke Nukem fans with its platform type game play as you guide Snake Logan, the local CIA agent, through downtown Metro in search of Dr. Mangle. First, however, you have to blast

your way past various mutated monsters using your M60 and your limited supply of grenades. You will also need to find the many hidden entrances to search out the keys, shards and cardkeys needed to free the hostages. As and gameplayer will know, Apogee are the leading game publishers in the USA and anyone ordering Bio Menace are guaranteed excellent gameplay. Requires EGA.

CATCH SIMONA IN NEW YORK CITY

Order Code: 15150

Total Disks: 1

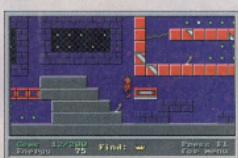


This intriguing new graphics-based adventure game come puzzle is a challenge for the budding detective. Simona, the villainess of the piece, is an ex-FBI agent out to wreak havoc by robbing every major landmark in New York City. Your task, armed only with a street guide and crime computer, is to stop her on her little criminal jaunts. You travel around questioning folk, arresting thugs and henchmen, collecting clues and all the time getting closer to Simona's whereabouts. Once a crime is solved another quickly follows, each one progressively harder to crack. A highly entertaining and individual game. Requires Hard Disc & EGA.

CLYDE'S ADVENTURE

Order Code: 15490

Total Disks: 1



Help Clyde in his quest for lost treasure as you guide him through the sixteen deadly castles. Mastering this fast-paced arcade style game requires as much logic as reflex as you take Clyde through the smooth scrolling animation, which includes traps, puzzles, twists and hilarious surprises at every turn. The musical soundtrack and digitised sound effects help make Clyde's Adventure a highly entertaining and addictive game. It is very similar to a number of the Apogee platform type games. Requires EGA.

EGA RISK

Order Code: 1720

Total Disks: 1



For two to six players this game is a good excuse for having some friends over for a few cans of your favourite soft drink. Very similar to the board game the idea is to control your armies to win continents and eventually take over the world. This does however take a lot of thought and cunning by arranging your armies on the

computerised world map, in the best way for attack and defence. To play the game you first choose the number of players. The computer then deals out the countries, randomly, to each player. You are each given a number of men to deploy on your territories at the start. Battles are won and lost by the roll of a computer-simulated dice and by overwhelming your opponents defenders. Newcomers to this game will find the instructions easy to follow and will welcome the save game facility. Requires EGA.

DESERT RAID

Order Code: 15510

Total Disks: 1



This program is one of a new batch produced by Copysoft, a Company new to the games development world. You will find however, that all the games with special agent 'Skunny Hardnuf' as the central character are professionally written and great fun to play. In Desert Raid you have to help Skunny combat the evil dictator 'Sadam Insane' who has built a vast army he intends to let loose on the World. You fly Skunny's bi-plane armed with a few bombs and a machine gun and try to take out the enemy planes, helicopters and gun emplacements in this full scrolling game with very good graphics. Requires VGA.

LOST IN SPACE

Order Code: 15520

Total Disks: 1



Another Copysoft game featuring Skunny Hardnuf as the special agent sent to combat the green 'Schnozes' who have taken all our satellite dishes. In your moon buggy with twin lasers you have to jump craters, laser guns and everything else in your path as you fight flying saucers to catch the Schnozes on their hover bikes. This is sure to be a winner with children and parents alike. Requires VGA.

MARIO VGA

Order Code: 5250

Total Disks: 1



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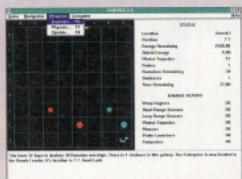
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objects in the foreground move quicker than those on other levels. It has excellent end of level sections that make the game even more worthwhile. All in all this game is one of the most amusing and innovative games that has been released this year which is sure to become the number one best seller very quickly for the games Author's 'Quantum Development'. Requires Hard Disc & VGA.

WIN TREK

Order Code: 15370
Total Disks: 1



This is the classic cult game, Trek, brought bang up to date for running under Windows. I can't claim

to be a fan or expert on the game, but all the usual and expected features are here. It's well laid out with sufficient help for the experienced player, although it does lack an overview for the absolute beginner. Right, all I have to do now is find some Romulans to beat up...

WOLFENSTEIN EXTRAS V1.1

Order Code: 8140
Total Disks: 1



If you are a complete nutter you can complete wolfenstein in a day or so, burning the midnight oil etc. The Transend wolfenstein extras disk will breathe new life into sharewares best selling 3D shoot 'em up. This version is for the 1.1 version of wolfenstein and will work with the registered version of Wolfenstein 3D. Requires EGA.

ZONE 66

Order Code: 14620
Total Disks: 2



Zone 66 is one of the latest offerings from Epic Megagames. The game though, does need a minimum of a 386, 1MB of RAM and 2MB free on an uncompressed hard drive, this does however mean that the game is one of the leading adventure 'shoot 'em ups' on the market. The game starts with an excellent animation and storyline to get you in the mood, you then control a choice of fighter planes to avenge the death of your loved ones. You can choose between a faster craft with turning ability but has less payload or one with increased amount of weaponry available. Once you have chosen your craft and weapons you are

then able to play the game which is very fast with excellent in-game enemies, it is far better than any of the current console games out at the moment. You will not be disappointed on ordering this program. Due to the size of the files it is only available on 3.5" disks but as the recent reviews in many magazines will tell you, it's worth getting. Requires Hard Disc & VGA.

HARD TRACK

Order Code: 15430
Total Disks: 1



This novel package has as its main program a complete hard disk audit system which allows you to keep an eye on all the changes made to a hard drive's file list, including network drives. The reports itemise new, modified or missing files and will be found invaluable in recovering from a failed software installation or for removing a shareware evaluation product completely from disk once the trial period is up. Also included is HDLIST, a file viewer companion program. Requires Hard Disc.

SHARE SPELL

Order Code: 15310
Total Disks: 1



This is a stand-alone spell checker for use with DOS word processors and text editors which don't supply this feature,

or where the spell checking is so ineffective as to make it useless. It's completely interactive and prompts you as it checks for spelling errors. At each word it thinks misspelled you have the option of replacing from a suggestion list, manually correcting, adding the word to the dictionary, marking it for later correction or totally ignoring it. Supplied with a 112,000 word dictionary, this is an excellent addition to any writer's toolkit. Requires Hard Disc.

WORD FUGUE

Order Code: 15260
Total Disks: 3



Word Fugue 3.0 is a fully featured word processor for DOS which incorporates just about everything you

will need. It puts many a commercial WP to shame with its feature list! Apart from the usual stuff, Word Fugue also supports multiple document windows, file inclusion for dividing sections or chapters into separate files, a pop-up calculator, extensive spell-checking, macros, AutoSave, word counting, font support and much, much, more.

CD MUSIC PLAYER

Order Code: 15410
Total Disks: 1



Turn your CD-ROM drive into a full function music CD player with this marvellous Windows application. All disks in

your collection can be entered into the program's database, including titles, artists and track names, which are automatically displayed when the CD is loaded. You can specify the play order, repeat a track many times and even chop out those tracks you don't like. It also offers an intro scan feature for quickly locating a track you can hum along to in your head, but have forgotten the name of!

WORD TRANSLATOR FOR WINDOWS

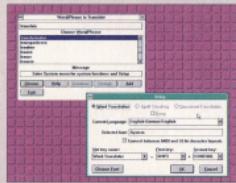
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Visual Player is an excellent MOD player from Spain with a graphical interface, mouse support and plenty of features. These include psychedelic lights to accompany the music, mono or stereo spectrum analysers, sample lists and full push-button control. Requires VGA

MOD EDIT

Order Code: 15460

Total Disks: 1



ModEdit is a music editor and sequencer designed to support MOD music files with up to four tracks of digitized instrument samples. It caters for all the popular sound cards - SoundBlaster, Disney Sound Source, Covox - or any D/A converter fitted to the parallel port. It even comes with instructions on building your own! Even those without such equipment can get a

taste of MOD mania as this program will work quite happily with the PC's internal loudspeaker. It's also supplied with a number of SAM sample files, plus an object module file for including MOD playing routines in your own programming efforts. This is a nicely designed bit of software which doesn't require a graphics card to be of any real use!

MOD PLAY PRO

Order Code: 15470

Total Disks: 1



Mod Play Pro lets you play Amiga

SoundTracker/NoiseTracker and ProTracker modules on any PC regardless of whether you have a sound card installed, although it makes full use of one if you have it. The Amiga MOD format - a file comprising up to 31 digitized instrument samples and a four-channel music track - is now the industry standard. Mod Play Pro is written entirely in assembly language so it plays even on a slow 286 processor, which is not always the case with other examples. Another nice feature is that you can load up Mod Play Pro then run another program with the music still blasting away in the background.

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This is the Windows version of Word Translator found elsewhere in the catalogue. It's

compatible with all Windows word processors because it uses the clipboard for cut and paste of a word or phrase from one language, through Word Translator for Windows, and back into your word processor. As supplied it offers conversion between English and five other languages - Russian, Portuguese, Danish, German and Spanish. You can also add words and phrases, plus the registered version brings with it extended translation modules and grammar checking for selected languages. Requires Hard Disc .

VISUAL PLAYER

Order Code: 15200

Total Disks: 1

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APOGEE GAMES

SPIDER MAN - Follow up to the best. WOLFENSTEIN 3D - Excellent shoot the Nazis. WOLFENSTEIN EXTRAS - Maps, cheats, pacmen, CATACOMB ABSYSS 3D - 3D fantasy adventure. COSMO'S COSMIC ADVENTURES - Best platform. MAJOR STRYKER - Excellent parafase shoot em up. KEEF DREAMS - Latest Keef platform game. COMMANDER KEEN 6 - Aliens at your baby sitter. COMMANDER KEEN 4 - Goofy Goody Best Keen. COMMANDER KEEN 1 - Marooned on Mars. DUKE NUKEEM - Save the world from Dr Proton. REDUCE - 12 extra levels for Duke Keen. SECRET AGENT - Top secret agent to the platform. CRYSTAL CAVES - Brilliant multiplatform game. PAGANITZ [2] - Super 20 level Boulderdash game. DARK AGES - Protected kingdom against a warlord. ARCTIC ADVENTURE & COAVES OF THOR. 1 disk. PHARAOH'S TOMB & MONUMENTS OF MARS. MATHS RESCUE - The best maths education. WORD RESCUE - The best spelling education.

EPIC MEGAGAMES

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TOP GAMES

SCRAMBLE E - Top board game with lettered files. MONOPOLY - The classic of the top board game. LAST HALF OF DARKNESS - Graphics adventure. FORD SIMULATOR III - We have it on disk. HUGO'S HOUSE OF HORRORS - Rescue Penelope. HUGO II WHOMping - Superb number. HUGO III - The Return of DODU [2] - adventure. PC PRO GOLF - Play a round of golf on our course. POWER CHESS - Top chess game. CLASSIC PINBALL - V. Good pinball simulator. SHOOTING GALLERY - 7 different shooting events. WIZARDS LAIR - Fantasy D&D adventure game. EAST OF EDEN - Excellent adventure game. BASS CLASS - Fishing simulator & tutorial. GLOBAL WARFARE - Like the board game Risk. DULLES TOWER AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL - Sim BATFISH SUBMARINE COMMAND - Sub Sim. CATCH IF YOU CAN - Good baseball game.

STARFIRE - Excellent space arcade game.

SNAKES AND LADDERS - Super VGA game.

KUNG FU LOUIE (2) - VGA combat game.

SPACE FLIGHT SIMULATOR - Rocket sim.

GREEN HORNET - Superb 3D game & EGA +

CADDIE HACK GOLF - 18 hole 3D game.

CAPTURE THE FLAT - VGA animated combat.

MEGATRON (3D) (2) - Role playing adventure.

INDIANA JONES FATE - Shareware version.

CORNOB (3D) - 3D flight simulator.

SCORCHER - Excellent 3D sim with crowds.

MORKIN (2) - DGA game with a weird

DRACULA - 3D game in London - Graphics adventure.

VAMPIR TALZIMAN OF INVOCATION

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ZEPHYRUS - Excellent game in Pompeii.

1989STAR - Updated Tetris variation.

SCORCHED EARTH - VGA battle tanks.

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LLAMATRON - Best shoot em up 100 levels.

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CASTLE OF THE WINDS - Epic RPG

CASTLE OF THE WINDS - Epic RPG

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BACKMAN & CHESS

BATTLE ON DISTANT PLANETS - 2Mb.

SONDBLASTER MUSIC

BLASTER MASTER 5.2 - Editor for VOC/WAV, SND, NTI, IFF files.

WOW II - MOD music player.

MUSICA - PCG 1000 music.

JAZZMASTER - 16 bit instrument Amiga player.

DRUMBLASTER - Electronic drum machine.

GMUSIC - 255 track print MIDI sequencer.

SEQUENCER PLUS - Elaborate MIDI control.

PANIC - Big Future Crew demo with gtx.

UNREAL - 384x192 pixel Crew demo.

MONSTERMASTER - Amazing monster files.

BEYOND 2000 - MOD for Trackerbase.

TREKVIOS - 6 star trek VOC files.

MUSIC STYLES MIDI FILES - Blues, drums reggae, mowtown, new wave, rock.

BEATLES MIDI FILES - Yesterday/Strawberry.

MONSTERMASTER - 2000+ VOC files.

PAULA - Super VOC files.

MONSTERMASTER - 2000+ VOC files.

SOUND EFFECTS VOC FILES - Car starting, breaking glass, nuclear explosion, barking, cannon firing, gun shot, water dripping etc.

WINDOWS PROGS

MULTI-UTIL - Avery laser label printer.

DRAG & VIEW - View any file whatever program created it.

CORETEX BUSINESS MANAGER - English accounting & database.

MONSTERMASTER - Windows version of Fractini.

WINSPILL - Spelleccher for Win3.

WALLPAPER ART - 12 EMPIC files.

WYNOFILES - Relational database.

ABOVE & BEYOND - Project management.

MONSTERMASTER - 2000+ VOC files.

AFRICAN ANIMALS BMP - 21 pics in full screen photo quality 256 col.

JAMWAR ICONS - Nearly 2000 of them.

IKE - Icon editor/designer.

TRI TYPE FONTS (11) 140 fonts and a good installer for 1Mb.

ADOCB TYPE MANAGER (11) - 140 fonts for 1Mb.

MONSTERMASTER - 2000+ VOC files.

EDUCATION

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GCSE PHYSICS - Multiple choice.

GCSE SCIENCE - National curriculum.

GCSE COMPUTER STUDIES

HODGE Podge for HENRIETTA - Maths for 4-10 year olds.

HENRIETTA'S BOOK OF SPELLS - Spelling for 4-10 year olds.

SPELLBOUND - As above.

ANIMAL QUIZZER - About animals.

ANIMATED MATHS - For infants.

ANIMATED MATHS - for infants.

BERIT'S DINOSAURS - drawing fun.

SENIOR PHYSICS FACTS - Age 15+.

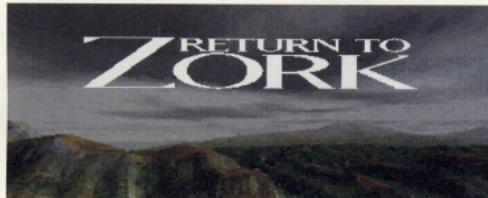
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AFTER HOURS

Return to Zork 104



IT'S been ages since the last instalment of adventure games based around the world of Zork. Now it's time to return. Forget the old days, text-only adventures are outdated. Pull up a chair and prepare yourself for a virtual journey through a different world.

Has full motion video become a reality? Looks like it with 30 frames a second high quality video and superb scrolling and panning around scenery - à la 7th Guest. The good news is that you don't need a CD-Rom to play it, just 18Mb of hard drive storage space. However, the CD version is even better.

Using enhanced graphics and video, Return to Zork has all the character of the original games and much more. Hang on to your seat and join Andrew Shaw on a roller coaster ride around Zork.

PCH LOWDOWN EXPLAINED

Works on: What does the game work sensibly on. Normally this will be something like 386SX upwards which means it will work just as well on a 486DX2. If it doesn't, we'll say so

Recommended: This is the spec of machine where the game works well enough to be truly enjoyable - not what it runs fastest on

Base memory: How much memory below the 640k barrier you need to run a game. Type *Mem* to see how much you have

Total memory: Does the game also need extended (XMS) or expanded memory (EMS) in order to work or produce sound effects? We tell you what's required

Hard drive: How much space you'll need to install the game

Game graphics: The mode and resolution that the game actually uses

RATINGS

Visuals: How good are the static graphics, the animation, the speed of movement?

Audio: Does it sound like someone banging a stick inside a can or is a miniature orchestra hiding inside your PC?

Interest: Is the game's plot, concept, theme or *raison d'être* interesting enough to make you buy it and play, and then keep coming back in a month's time for more?

Adrenaline: One for the action orientated style games here. Does it keep you on the edge of your seat, or are you falling off it with boredom?

LOWDOWN	
Program	RETURN TO ZORK
Price	£45.99
Works on	286
Recommended	386SX+
Base memory	580k (600k for digital sound)
Total memory	640k
Sound support	SoundBlaster, Disney Sound Source, Tandy, ProAudio Spectrum, Covox Speech Thing
Control	Mouse
Best control	Mouse
Hard Drive	20Mb
Game graphics	VGA
Contact - Activation - 0295 252524	
RATINGS	
Visuals	92%
Audio	81%
Interest	88%
Adrenaline	83%
OVERALL 87%	

HOURS

ECTS Report 95

Find out about all the latest happenings at the European Computer Trade Show, as Ged Start and Duncan Evans give the low down on what's coming up. Start writing your Christmas present lists now.

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Take a sneaky look behind the scenes at Empire, as Lance Concannon finds out what is on its way on to a shop shelf near you. Among the products being previewed are Cyberspace and Dream Web.

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3-D graphics and realistic game play help Mark Wyatt believe he really is ploughing through Vietnam waterways in search of Viet Cong. See if he gets his review written before he gets blown away.

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The European Computer Trade Show (ECTS) is the premier event in the computer games calendar. Duncan Evans and Ged Start report

THE BIG show

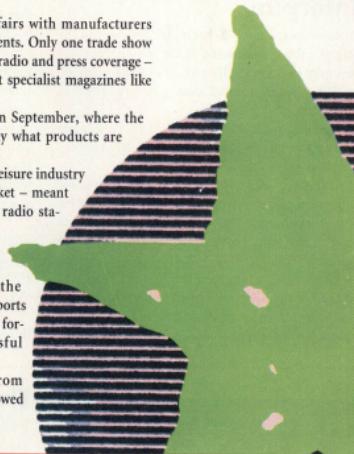
TRADE shows are traditionally dull affairs with manufacturers showing off their wares to their major clients. Only one trade show attracts an unprecedented amount of TV, radio and press coverage – including the major daily papers, not just specialist magazines like *PC Home*.

That show is ECTS in London early in September, where the major games publishers announce exactly what products are going to be on sale this Christmas.

The impact of computer games on the leisure industry as a whole – especially in the youth market – meant that there were more than a few TV and radio stations dragging heavy equipment down narrow aisles.

The country's most popular radio program, One FM's Steve Wright in the Afternoon, is running a whole series of reports on the event by Dominik Diamond – the former host of Channel 4's successful GamesMaster.

The only thing wrong with ECTS from most people's view is that they are not allowed in. Well, that's trade shows for you.



THE most significant new exhibitor at this autumn's ECTS was the mighty presence of Microsoft, the world's biggest software manufacturers bar none. They are more commonly associated with business oriented applications like Word for Windows and Excel as well as operating systems like MS-DOS and Windows.

Their presence at a leisure-based show demonstrates a major shift in company policy as well as the best endorsement yet of the *PC Home* user market.

Microsoft recently opened their Consumer Products Division in the UK and have already launched a variety of products targeted at home users. These include Microsoft Money and Microsoft Publisher 2 – both of which have been featured by *PC Home* on the MegaDisk – as well as various multimedia products like Cinemania, reviewed in September.

The latest additions to the consumer range sees the arrival of Microsoft Flight Simulator 5 and Microsoft Arcade. The first is an impressive and realistic sim with greatly improved graphics over earlier versions. While lacking the adrenaline of a

combat flight sim, it will appeal to those who love flying for flying's sake.

Arcade is a totally different proposition as it consists of a sizeable selection of some of the all time classic coin-op games like Space Invaders and Battle Zone (a 3-D tank battle simulation). Many of the games are over 10 years old and will seem primitive to Sega and Nintendo fans, while 30-somethings can have a great time reliving their mis-spent youth.

PC Home will be visiting Microsoft in the near future for an exclusive interview with Paul Tollef, the head of Consumer Products, to hear their view on the growth of the home market.

US Gold

Maybe the second biggest scorer on the thrillometer was LucasArts Rebel Assault – CD only, courtesy of 15 minutes of Star Wars video and 15 levels of flying, shooting action. So it looked pretty amazing, but gameplay? Very mediocre if you ask me. Still, it should be a lot fun in the short term and is one of those games to show friends to prove your CD-Rom is better than their Sega MegaCD.



Sam & Max – LucasArts



Rebel Assault – LucasArts



Elder Scrolls – US Gold



Interplay's Sim Ant



Stonekeep - Castle capers in '94



Star Trek 2 - Judgement Rites

Apart from that Sam&Max is one of those cutesy, loadsalalugs graphic adventures that seem so popular at the moment – though it does have some hilarious sub-games at the fair. I particularly liked the squash a rat game.

Looking nice, and fairly reminiscent of EA's spell casting thing is Elder Scrolls, though this is much more RPG based. Watching it in action though it looks like everyone has got their Underworld algorithms in full gear because this was very smooth.

There were other lovely products including a decent PC shoot-'em-up called Raiden and news that the powers that be in the States have finally given the go ahead to Streetfighter II. So we'll be reviewing that next month (hopefully).

Interplay

Bizarre award goes to Interplay for having the largest rubber/foam stand at the show. They had this very impressive stone effect – albeit orange – castle type stand that had some chap demonstrating Stonekeep.

It looks excellent, but the whiff of warm foam and rubber was enough to drive off the skeletons the chap was so valiantly chopping up.

Stonekeep was another of those Underworld influenced games, except graphically and animation wise it was outstanding. Trouble is you're going to have to wait until the first quarter 1994 before it's released.

Meanwhile, before then there's the CD version of Lord of the Rings with bits of video from Ralph Bakshi's film in October. Big news for RPG fans comes in the form of Dungeon Master 2 early next

year and for Star Trek fans there's Trek 2 on floppy and Trek – 25th Anniversary on CD, both in November.

Finally, creepy graphics award for Sim Ant on CD and for CD-Rom owners Interplay has a nice range of products coming out starting this Autumn.

Virgin

Thanks to Westwood for a finished and boxed copy of Lands of Lore (well tasty), and also for dragging us through The Hand of Fate, otherwise known as Kyrandia 2, which looked as graphically sumptuous as its predecessor but without the juvenile humour that ruined it.

Just when you thought there was nothing better than Sensible Soccer, Dino Dini – of Kick Off fame – has Goal coming up in October. Also on the way is Krusty's Fun House (oh dear), Mortal Kombat (I'll believe it when I see it) and Terminator 2 (looks smart) in November. And there's a sequel to Reach for the Skies entitled D-Day – Operation Overlord.

Finally, Dave Gibbons of Watchmen graphic novel and Lure of the Temptress game has worked his magic on Beneath a Steel Sky. Looks nice but we're still waiting to see the game.

Mirage

For sheer fastness, especially if you like robots, was Mirage's Rise of the Robots. Soundings rather like an Isaac Asimov novel, it features some stunning SVGA ray traced graphics.

They weren't seen running in the game, but oh no, said Mirage, it will have these extremely sexy



Privateer – It's Wing Commander married to Elite and it looks well smart

Electronic Arts

While there were plenty of products worth seeing, I have to admit that the one I wanted to see the most was Privateer from Origin via EA. After the disappointment of Wing Commander Academy, it was with some trepidation that I watched a demonstration.

Alright, you can stop wondering, it's great – just like Elite meets Wing Commander in fact. There are 60 planets to land on, missions and sub-plots and characters to meet in bars. What's particularly nice is that each planet has different graphics and characteristics, so the university world looks like a futuristic Oxford and the pleasure planet looks like a pretty good idea to me.

Privateer was due for release a couple of weeks after the show but, allowing for the inevitable slip-page, start checking out your local shop now.

Also up from EA was the latest instalment in the Ultima saga, number 8 to be exact. According to Richard Garriott, aka Lord British, it's a quarter of the size of Ultima VII and has a quarter of the NPCs in it. Yes that's right, it's much smaller.

The good news is that there is much more animation, the combat scenes are excellent and there are a large number of very, very impressive cinematic sequences. Check this out before Christmas

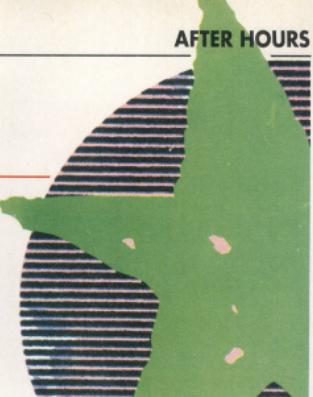
graphics in it. Wait and see, it'll be out in January.

Also announced by Mirage was a deal with American software people, QQP, to distribute a number of nice strategy games in the UK. Due first is Conquered Kingdoms, with Perfect General II due in January 94 worth looking out for.

Meanwhile there's the UMS compilation series for October and Jack the Ripper - reviewed this month on page 118.



Mirage's Rise of the Robots



Overlord from Virgin

The reel deal

Okay, there was lots of exciting stuff to see, but one of the most *whahaay* products wasn't software at all. It was an MPEG card offering full screen, any resolution 30 frames a second video in 32k colours, and it works on any 386SX and upwards PC.

Great I hear you saying, what's going to support it? Well, one of the first games, of 20 to be released before Christmas, is Return to Zork - bundled with it in fact, making it even more amazing than before. Honestly, this makes 7th Guest look like two rocks and a piece of string. There's also a version of Dragon's Lair which looks very nifty.

No UK price just yet. US retail is \$449 but expect to hear a lot about the ReelMagic board in the future.

Everything else?

Not quite. There'll be part two of the show report next month, but rather quickly, because I'm running out of room, here are some more of the highlights. CyberRace from Cyberdreams has come on a lot since we last saw it in the Spring, to the effect that it's now the race version of Comanche with similar, but high speed, 3-D bitmapped graphics.

Looks and plays a treat. And the good news is that you can either sit through the plot interludes with digitised characters or just jump through to the racing. CyberRace is due soon, but don't hold your breath for Hunters of Ralk, which is being developed with Gary Gygax of D&D fame.

It was hideously sweaty at the Psygnosis suite, but Microcosm looked cosmic and Dracula looked like it was finally going to be some sort of game, with yes, another Wolfenstein 3-D section.

Finally, over at the Ocean stand, complete with Jurassic Park gate, there was Jurassic Park - the game of the film that's now been out for months and months. Thankfully isn't a platform game, but instead has a nice Commando style shooting and rescue the hostages section as well as a - can you possibly guess? - yes, another Wolfenstein section.

However, TFX is a rather juicy looking flight sim with UN endorsed violence - no Bosnian scenario unsurprisingly, Burnin' Rubber is a drive around the world effort, European Champions is supposed to be better than Sensible, but we didn't see it running, and last of all, Ryder Cup Golf is the officially licensed game of the event where we're going to beat the Americans this time round - alrighty!

More show news next month, including all the gubbins from Microprose, Cocktel Vision and a cast of thousands. ■



Seawolf - Technology made easy

because it looks like the best one yet by a long chalk.

If submarines are your thing and you remember 688 Attack Sub you'll love SSNN-21 Seawolf. Taking all those really techy elements such as pas-

sive and active sonar, sound signatures and temperature gradients, they've been made graphically fruity and very easy to get to grips with. It looks extremely nice and should be accessible for all levels of players.

Lance Concannon
casts aside the veil of
secrecy to give you a
glimpse of a couple of
imminent releases

THE headlines scream "Computer Virus Hacking Porn Violence Scandal!". Shortly after, every computer magazine in the country prints a comment feature offering their oh so informed opinion on the subject of sex and violence in games.

So you try to experience some of this foul corruption at first hand only to find it doesn't exist.

If you want to watch a film with lots of scantily clad bimbos and lashings of blood and guts, no problem, the video library shelves are piled high with them.

Sex and violence sells films - à la Basic Instinct - and whether the moral guardians like it or not, this is what the masses want. But there's a big hole in the market for decent, plausible, adult games.

Empire are about to bring serious adult entertainment to the PC with the imminent release of their new adventure, DreamWeb. Set against a Blade Runner style backdrop, it casts you an assassin who must kill seven characters to complete the adventure and save humanity from a fate worse than Songs of Praise.

UNDER DEVELOPMENT

DREAMWEB

DREAMWEB uses a direct overhead view, and a magnification mode allows you to explore every last detail of each location to make sure you don't miss any clues.

The first target in the game is a Rock star. To get into his hotel room you will have to kill two security guards by burying an axe in the chest of one and blowing the brains out of the next.

Having disposed of the guards you enter the room



The magnify mode, on the bottom left, allows you to examine the smallest details

to find said Rock star lying on a bed with a blonde groupie bouncing up and down on him. The bimbo screams and jumps off to hide under the bed, leaving him lying stark naked.

After you casually blow his head off with a high calibre pistol, his chest proceeds to explode open while some kind of mystic force escapes from his soul, or something. If that isn't *adult* enough for you then you probably need therapy, or locking up.



Honestly, the lengths you have to go to just to get a pop star's autograph

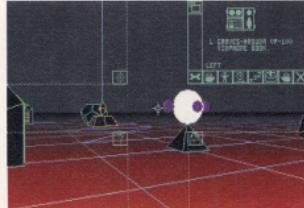
CYBER SPACE

ALSO due any day now from Empire is Cyber Space, a roleplaying game with a difference. It also uses the dark future cyberpunk setting but that's about where the similarities end.

In CyberSpace you will be able to move around a gigantic city constructed of 3-D polygon graphics, and interact with hundreds of characters each with an individual bitmapped face and personality.

As if having a huge city to explore wasn't enough, your character will also be able to log into cyberspace which is a kind of virtual reality network. Just to complicate matters, your actions within cyberspace will effect events in the real world.

Well, not the *real* real world, I mean the real world in the game. Crikey, this VR business is getting me all confused. I'm going to have a little lie down, but in the meantime I'll leave you with a whole pile of rather spiffy screenshots to look at.



3-D polygon graphics create the huge virtual reality city that you must explore



No, no, honest guy, I wasn't just about to break into this apartment with these electronic lockpicks



This is your VidPhone. You use it for communicating with people who are a long way away, apparently



Ransacking people's bedrooms is just one of the many skills you will have to master in order to complete the game

ELOPMENT



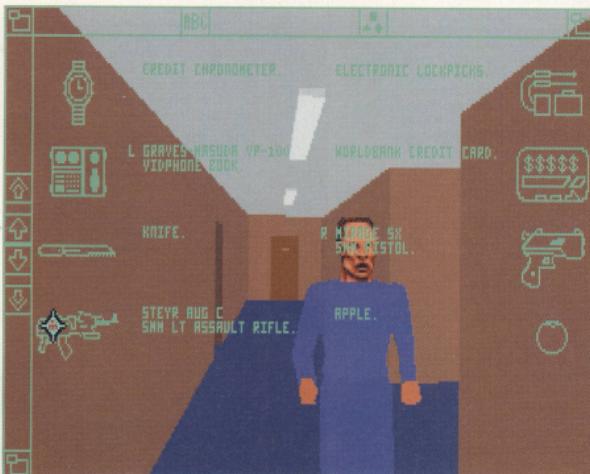
Kick down the door, draw your pistol, take aim and ...



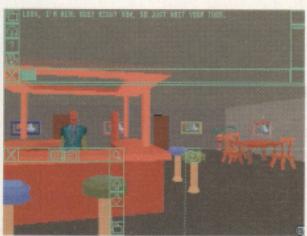
.....10 seconds later it's all over.
Right, where did that blonde go?



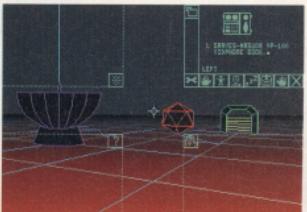
The game opens in your girlfriend's apartment. However, there's no foul corruption to be found here, as she's tucked firmly under the blankets



All important information is relayed to the player via a head up display. This one shows our inventory



The Virtual Reality equivalent to Cheers



Events in cyberspace will affect those in the real world within the game

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- 9438 PKMenu, front end menu for PKZip etc
- 10023 PK2ZIP/PKUNZIP, file compression utility
- 2730 BigText, make .exe file from ASCII!
- 9880 Maxiform, more disk space formatter
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DESKTOP ACCESSORIES

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COMMUNICATIONS

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SEAL team



Start again and this time listen up



Use the tactical map, and plan it properly...



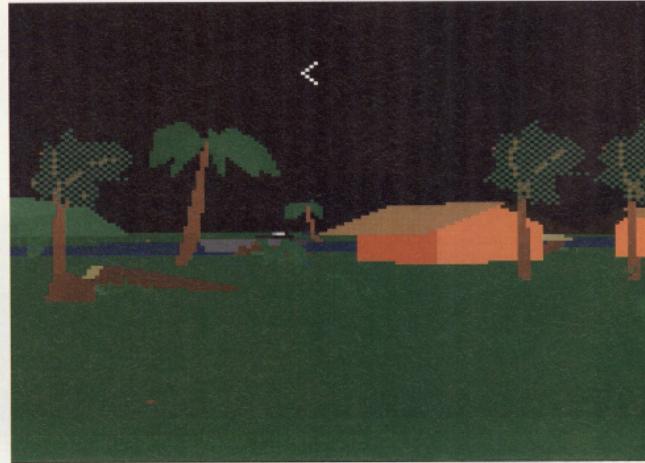
...so when the VC do appear you can blow them away

SEAL Team is a combination of strategy and action, but with thought needed much more than fast reflexes. As with many military sims you take command of a team (in this case four men), directing three of the Seals, and actually playing the point man.

You start by choosing who you will play, attending the briefing, equipping the members of the team with various weapons and equipment, then listening to other Seals talking a load of bull. I particularly appreciated the gent who warned me not to waste my ammo, after having one team, not including the point man, blow away all their ammo without making a single hit.

Weapons include a mix of grenades, guns and miscellaneous items such as the satchel charge, while equipment comes in three forms: Medical kit, radio and prisoner handling kit. The point man must have a radio, a medical kit is a good idea, and I never take prisoners, so generally the prisoner handling kit didn't get much use.

Unfortunately, while the equipment is fully



The boys heading for their target, being all inconspicuous..

described, and the weaponry has a technical write-up, there is no description of the weapons. Thus, I assume that the Hush-Puppy is a silenced pistol, but I wouldn't swear to it.

All these actions are accompanied by digitised graphics with a separate music track for each screen. But it is a good idea not to make any mistakes since back tracking through the screens can be time consuming.

Insert and fire

Once the team is briefed and equipped it's time to hit the jungle. In general the action comes in a number of phases: Insertion, action and extraction. Any resemblance to anything else is totally coincidental.

The insertion is an animated graphic of a boat or helicopter dropping off the team, extraction is the same, except that the team enters the vehicle. The action is where you get to shoot things.

During the action you will have under your command the Seal team, the insertion and extraction vehicles, and an aerial strike unit. The last is espe-

reviewed by Mark Wyatt



...until some idiot trips over a log and disaster strikes



Quick, quick, come and get us, before it's too late



Unfortunately it's too late. The bugler was earning overtime

cially useful for large groupings of commies.

Said action is controlled by two means. Number one is to issue commands via the map. Here waypoints can be set, support teams directed, and, if required, Seal team can be split into two or three groups, each of which can also be directed.

In general, this method plays similarly to a wargame, with the added advantage that you can view the action directly from viewpoints by each of the support or subsidiary Seal teams.

The second method is to view the action through the eyes of the point man. This has more in common with an action game than a strategy game, since you control the direction the point man faces, when he shoots, or lobs a grenade. At the same time it is possible to direct the other members of the team.

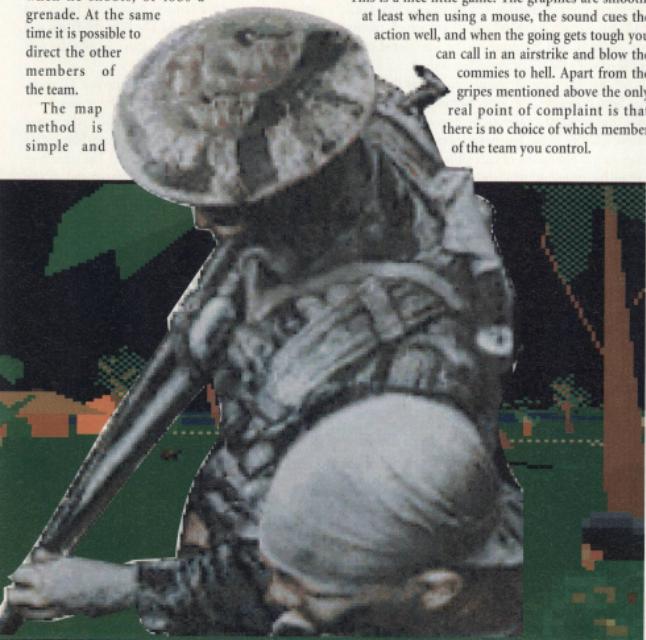
The map method is simple and

easy, mainly since it just involves clicking on the command buttons. The direct method is more difficult, but sometimes you have to get out there and do the dirty work.

In any case, there is an interesting flaw. Regardless of the fact that a Seal ought to be able to shoot and hit a target, closing to a range of around three metres, and blasting off an entire magazine sometimes seems to be the only way to hit anything. And the point man is terminally stupid, since he always stands up to reload, even if there's an entire army of VC closing in for the kill.

Call an air strike

This is a nice little game. The graphics are smooth, at least when using a mouse, the sound cues the action well, and when the going gets tough you can call in an airstrike and blow the commies to hell. Apart from the gripes mentioned above the only real point of complaint is that there is no choice of which member of the team you control.



Wolfenstein - Shareware

While not being anything like Seal Team plotwise, Wally does give the chance to run around shooting people

'Nam - Domark - 081-780 2222

This is the wargame version of Seal Team so arcade fans can forget it. If you like strategy and maps though, this is the business

Gumboot - Accolade - 081-877 0880

Knocking around on budget, Gumboot is a 3-D romp through Vietnam waterways. Dull at times, but loads of laughs when the shooting starts.

REPLAY

LOWDOWN

Program	Seal Team
Price	£39.95
Works on	386SX +
Recommended	386DX40
Base memory	587k
Total memory	2Mb (1Mb EMS)
Sound support	AdLib, SoundBlaster, Roland MT-32 & LAP-C 1, Pro Audio Spectrum
Control	Mouse, keyboard, joystick
Best control	Mouse & keyboard
Hard drive	3.5Mb
Game graphics	VGA (320x200 256c)

Contact - Electronic Arts - 0753 549442

RATINGS

Visuals	75%
Audio	84%
Interest	88%
Adrenoline	82%

OVERALL 84%

RETURN to zork



Full motion video allows for real-time action, like watching a television show



Some of the backgrounds are quite breathtaking as well as dangerous



There are loads of strange locations to discover and objects to find

RETURN To Zork is the latest in a series of adventure games that started many years ago in a text-only format. However, some major development work has been done for this most recent addition to the collection and, while some locations and puzzles will be familiar, a great deal has changed.

The game is set in the land of Zork, which many people will recall from the earlier challenges available on most formats. However, it has been several years since the last Zork release, so it is fair to expect that there would be some kind of improvement over the last episode. Like the previous games in the series, you find yourself transported to the world of Zork. The object is to find a way out, which is achieved by solving numerous puzzles that let you explore Zork and find an exit. As the problems are solved, points are awarded, and the game can be considered truly finished when the maximum 255 is scored.

All that has basically happened is that the series has been brought up to date. Nobody would expect any contemporary game to be devoid of graphics. However, this game has been taken a step further than simple emulation of current software technology and has been pushed slightly beyond what we have come to expect from the current crop.

The main thing is the quality of the graphic sequences. Sequences is actually a bit of an understatement as the game itself could be described as one large graphic sequence – a bit like a film or a TV programme.

I know that statements like this have been thrown around before, but this really is as close as you are



The full screen images are very clear and the video works very well

going to get at the moment to participating in an interactive movie. Having said this, any game of this type is going to find it twice as hard to succeed. Not only does it have to stand up against its competitors in the software industry – and with the likes of Sierra and LucasArts in the same business, this is some competition – but it also has to look good enough when lined up against television and films.

Hollywood embraced

These comparisons will be inevitable and any company bringing out a game of this type needs to be very wary.

Thankfully, Return to Zork, rather than trying to simply keep up with the likes of Hollywood, actively embraces it. With a famous name cast including actors from Twin Peaks and The Wonder Years, and professional production techniques, it must be said that the video in this is very nice.

It is not up to the standard of a proper TV show, but it is the closest to it that I have seen yet. Unfortunately, running on a computer, the actual picture quality comes out looking more like a VHS home video than professional quality. The advantage of this is that it runs at a decent speed and, if you weigh up the two sides, I think I would rather have full speed to a very high picture resolution.

This only applies to the actors, however – most of the backgrounds are of a very high quality and move around beautifully. There are several parts where buildings or rooms are approached and the first person view scrolls smoothly towards them.

This is implemented to such a high standard that



A stained glass window commemorates the nature of your death if you pass away



reviewed by Andrew Shaw



There are many indoor and outdoor locations to visit on your journey around Zork



The video footage of the vulture swooping in for the kill is more than enough to make you flinch



A wizard in a crystal ball is there to pass on helpful information

in the best sequences you can find yourself swaying and lurching around in front of the computer as you travel around the locations. The sound comes across adequately, with the digitised speech synching very well with the mouth movements of the actors. A variable soundtrack alters with location and atmosphere, though I don't think I'd buy the album. The characters' speech can also become very repetitive especially with those who say the same thing every time you enter a location.

Standard fare

It is very easy to get absorbed in the graphics but there is something to play underneath it all. It is fairly standard adventuring fare, though I found it a good challenge and got stuck on several occasions.

The area that can be explored is pretty big – there is quite a lot of gameplay even for those who find this kind of thing a bit of a doddle.

The puzzles present themselves in the usual way, with the solutions needing one thing to be used with another to get a third. Though this is nothing new, the graphics do add a bit of an alternate angle to it, so this couldn't really be described as the same as the rest.

There is also the opportunity to use a camera and a dictaphone to record views and

sounds, which you can then show to characters to gain reactions and additional information.

The interface is nice and completely mouse driven. The action is kept full screen by using a pointer that changes depending on what is being manipulated. Most of the time it is a clenched fist meaning nothing can be done, though if the pointer is passed over something of interest it will unfurl and point. If a path to a new location is available the pointer changes into an arrow when passed over it.

Objects are manipulated by clicking on them. This brings up a set of icons that represent actions, instead of having a permanent list of potential actions as is found on most of the standard graphic adventures around at the moment.

This interface is even more intuitive than the LucasArts type. Everything is controlled with the left mouse button, except for calling up the inventory which is achieved with a right click.

After visiting the first couple of locations, the interface immediately becomes second nature allowing it to be completely ignored. This leaves

you to get on with the game which only helps to bring the mechanics of the interactivity down to a minimum. If you like adventure games this is probably going to be your next purchase. Even if the problems were easy, many players would swoon over the graphics and the video and

go out and buy it anyway. I do think, though, that the puzzles are challenging enough to allow it to line up against other adventures and come off favourably. The question is, are you going to be able to resist anything that looks so pretty?



The journey shown to the bottom of the ladder sends your stomach churning

7th Guest – Virgin – 081-960 2255

Better resolution of graphics, but the video isn't as good and it doesn't compare in terms of speed and size. You might like this more if you have a higher spec machine and are just after something that looks impressive.

Reviewed: July 1993

Kings Quest series – Sierra – 0734 303322

Normal role playing adventure type game. Good graphics but no video, and story leaves a lot to be desired. More suitable for family computers

Reviewed: February 1993

Legend of Kyrandia – Virgin – 081-960 2255

Fantasy adventure, lots of goblins and things, will probably appeal more to role playing types. Bit of a cuddly storyline again

Reviewed: November 1993

REPLAY

LOWDOWN

Program	RETURN TO ZORK
Price	£45.99
Works on	286
Recommended	386SX+
Base memory	580k (600k for digital sound)
Total memory	640k
Sound support	SoundBlaster, Disney Sound Source, Tandy, ProAudio Spectrum, Covox Speech Thing
Control	Mouse
Best control	Mouse
Hard drive	20Mb
Game graphics	VGA

Contact – Activision – 0295 252524

RATINGS

Visuals	92%
Audio	81%
Interest	88%
Adrenaline	83%

OVERALL 87%

NHL *bockey*



Pick your team, choose that shirt and get ready for multi-million dollar endorsement deals



The teams line up for the national anthem – there's tears in my eyes



And they're off. The man with the filled star underneath has the puck

BASED on the best selling Megadrive game, EA's official NHL licensed ice hockey game fills something of a hole in the software roster of PC sports fans. Well, it would if it was any good. As I'm about to explain, this isn't going to convince any Sega owners to chuck their machines in the bin.

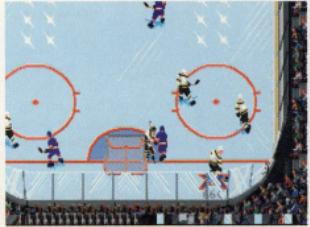
The original hockey game was one of simple enjoyment. Grab a friend, grip a joypad and get hacking about on the ice.

The PC offering goes down the same track with a one off exhibition game against a friend or the computer, and while the presentation is distinctly low res VGA with some pictures ported from the Megadrive, you're still expecting a good deal of fun when play begins.

At this point, unless you have a 486, disappointment is about to descend. I'm not saying the scrolling's jerky but it makes John Major look like Jonathan Ross by comparison. It gets better the faster the PC it's running on, but even on a top-of-range 66MHz machine it still wasn't convincing.

Before starting play all the penalties and line changes can be turned off. For those with a penchant for picky detail, they can all be left on so that every time the puck is hit across two lines a penalty is called, and all manner of violent behaviour isn't tolerated.

The line changes are a bit more for the aficionado. As each set of players tires they can either be replaced with a second string or left on the ice until



Still in possession, but being forced behind the computer controlled goal tender

they fall asleep. Turning off the line changes prevents fatigue and keeps the best players in all the time.

Back on the ice a rather strange (for PC users) two-button method of play is employed. Button one passes the ball in the direction the joystick is aimed, while button two fires it.

Coordinating them properly takes a bit of getting used to, especially since button one also activates the nearest player when defending. Since possession can swap around quickly in melees it isn't the best control system ever invented.

Defending is easy enough since judicious application of flying stick can remedy most skill shortcomings.

Good support

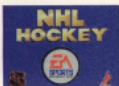
On the attack what is really needed is good supporting players, otherwise all that happens is the opposing goal tender saves the shot, he flops like a fish on a riverbank, and the defenders clear the puck.

This is where team stats come into play. Ha, you didn't really think the Preston Paperboys were really going to beat the LA Kings did you? Without good team mates in support, scoring is very difficult.

Still, with equally balanced teams, you can have a good deal of fun playing against a friend, though I have to say it's nowhere near as much fun as playing something like Sensible Soccer.



Ten minutes later and still no score. A face off results after I hack down their star player

reviewed by *Duncan Evans*

Won the face off, but with a man in the sin bin for dirty play there's no one up front to pass to



Between periods and these two geeks can offer statistical analysis on why we haven't scored



It's the end of another period, and the computer decides to show highlights of another game while my boys rest up

When the attraction of stuffing your mates has worn off, the PC version comes into its own. Not only is there a playoff series for an extended game playing session, but there's an entire league to run.

Unfortunately this is where it comes unstuck. Do you know how long the NHL league season is? It covers 84 games. At a minimum time period of 15 minutes a game that's an awful lot of playing.

Human players

To try and hurry things along when there is more than one human player, the league results and stats database can be exported to disk for other players to take away with them. The reasoning is that they can play any of their games against the computer without having to bore everyone else.

That doesn't really work that well in practice and the language in the manual about merging databases is guaranteed to put off completely anyone unfa-

miliar with them. To make matters worse all games with a human player have to be played – you can't force a computer generated result, which is pretty stupid considering the length of the season.

The final gem in this league-long shambles is the trading aspect. Only trades between human managers are allowed. Obviously coding some AI for the computer managers was too much hard work for EA's programmers.

What is good about NHL Hockey are the sound effects and music. They really generate some atmosphere, even if the game, mediocre graphics and all, doesn't.

There's isn't much choice in the PC hockey field, and NHL Hockey is far from being a winner. If you enjoy the real game and fancy a knock around with your mates, some measure of enjoyment can be had, but that's as far as it goes. ■

Wayne Gretzky's Hockey – Bethesda Softworks –

021 - 625 3388

Absolute tripe I'm afraid. There hasn't been and still isn't a top notch hockey game. This one had EGA graphics, even though it claimed VGA

Speedball 2 – Mirrorimage

Available on budget label, this is roller skating rather than ice skating, but it was a huge amount of fun and splendidly violent

Face Off - Gamestar

Not a season length offering like NHL Hockey, but it did feature reasonable graphics, skill levels, changeable period lengths and numbers of players. It also had something that doesn't seem to be in NHL - Fighting.

REPLAY

LOWDOWN

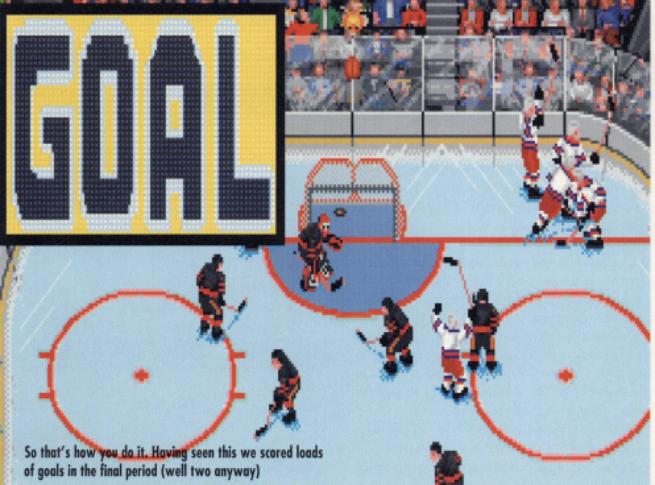
Program	NHL HOCKEY
Price	£44.99
Works on	386SX upwards
Recommended	486DX 33MHz
Base memory	580K
Total memory	3Mb (2Mb EMS required)
Sound	SoundBlaster, Roland, AdLib
Control	Mouse, keyboard, joystick (2)
Best control	Joystick
Hard drive	7Mb
Game graphics	VGA (320*200)

Contact – Electronic Arts - 0753 549442

RATINGS

Visuals	62%
Audio	90%
Interest	70%
Adrenaline	74%

OVERALL 73%



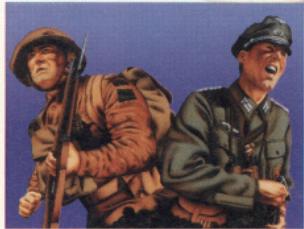
So that's how you do it. Having seen this we scored loads of goals in the final period (well two anyway)



reviewed by Lance Conannon

V FOR VICTORY

4 - Gold Juno Sword



As with all the best wargames Gold Juno Sword allows you to take command of either side, should you feel the urge to play Jerry



GJS uses easy to recognise icons to represent units. Hard core wargamers will be pleased to hear that official military symbols can also be used if they wish



The weather reports will allow you to plan ahead with much greater accuracy, making the most of air strikes, artillery and so on

EVER since the British received a darned good pasting from the Normans way back in 1066, they've been compelled to make up for this terribly bad show by kicking the pants off just about any other country that fancies its chances.

More often than not this turns out to be the Germans, probably because of their unsociable habit of invading other people's countries.

So as you've probably guessed by now, V for Victory 4 is yet another game depicting the heroic actions of our boys in Europe during WWII. Funnily enough, this time around it's the British that are invading Normandy, so I suppose that makes things about even.

The V for Victory series offers a high level of detail and realism. Players are bombarded with information such as weather reports, supply levels, unit strength and moral, all of which must be considered when planning the next move.

Gold Juno Sword is the fourth in the series, so those of you who have played any of the other games will know what to expect. It's pretty much a wargame in the traditional sense, in that units are represented by little counters and the map is divided up into hexagons.

The game is played in phases. First human and computer players issue orders to their troops, then each unit tries to carry out those orders. Finally, the computer works out the results of any combat and reports this information.

The action starts the morning after D-Day and concentrates on the battle to gain control of the Bayeux-Caen area of France. GJS is divided into several scenarios, each of which represents an individual stage of the campaign.

These may be played separately or players may opt to embark upon the entire campaign from beginning to end. If you own any of the other games in this series you will be able to link them all together and run them from the same environment.

As well as ground-based units, you can call in air support or fire missions from any nearby ships. The system for issuing orders offers plenty of flexibility. For example, instead of just ordering a unit to attack,



Aaah! Isn't that a nice touch, don't you think?

you can choose between nine different types of assault. Although the computer can take care of some of the more complex game details I still would not recommend this game to those who have never tried a wargame before as it is fairly tricky to get to grips with and comes with no less than three separate manuals.

The box boldly proclaims *State of the Art SVGA graphics*. These basically consist of lots of little counters scattered over a landscape made up of lots of little hexagons. The graphics are perfectly adequate, but I would hardly describe them as state of the art.

The same can be said for the game's sound – it's passable, but not exactly ground-breaking.

If you are an established wargaming fan or a confident newcomer, this game comes highly recommended along with the rest of the series.

If you've never played this style of challenge before and you're a bit nervous, I'd suggest something a little more lightweight, such as Campaign from Empire. ■

LOWDOWN

Program	V FOR VICTORY 4
Price	£34.99
Works on	386 or higher
Base memory	590k
Total memory	3Mb
Sound Support	AdLib, SoundBlaster
Control	Mouse
Best control	Mouse
Hard drive	5Mb
Game graphics	SVGA

Contact – Electronic Arts – 0753 549442

RATINGS

Visuals	63%
Audio	38%
Interest	85%
Adrenaline	42%

OVERALL 75%



NETWORK Q RAC RALLY



CHECK OUT THE LATEST FLIGHT SIMULATOR



This rally sim's so lifelike you can almost smell the high-octane fumes.
"We have lift off!" Just what you **don't** want to hear from your computer co-driver...

He's screaming pace notes above the shriek of the engine... you're pushing it to the edge in the final thrilling stages of the Network Q RAC Rally.

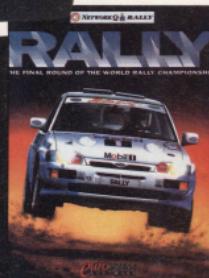
You're strapped into one of the five rally-bred supercars, speeding in the exact tracks of the '93 Rally leaders. Each car handles differently. Each tests your driving skills flat out.

You're picking up vital seconds when you hang a bend late, clip a bank and flip into a roll - damage your car and you dent your chances.

It's the sequel to the top-selling RAC Rally game. But the sound's even more deafening, the digitised video graphics even more *in your face* for an atmosphere that's totally turbo-charged.

Flying around the world's toughest rally course is one thing. Staying on earth is another.

WARNING: CRASH HELMETS NOT PROVIDED.



europress
SOFTWARE

CREATIVE LEISURE

Europress Software, Europa House,
Addington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4NP.
Tel. 0625 859033 Fax. 0625 879902

PATRIOT



The main menu screen where you can read the briefings before deciding which mission to embark upon



Players can examine and change the structure their armies, as well as alter unit formations



This is how most battles are viewed. If the graphic icons and waypoint arrows aren't technical enough for you, how about...

F anybody thinks that Patriot is just a cheap attempt to cash in on the Gulf war, think again. Maybe the battleset that comes with the game is based on a certain limited skirmish that took place in the Middle East a little while ago.

But you can rest assured that as soon as new conflicts develop around the world, extra battleset disks will become available immediately allowing you to recreate the world's most horrific battles in the comfort of your own home.

But let's not question the ethics of wargames, you want to know if it's any good. Good? Maybe. Different? Certainly. In most games players issue orders to their minions on a turn by turn basis making up the battle plan as they go. Of course, in the real world it just doesn't happen like that, and neither does it in Patriot.

On loading up an individual scenario you are provided with a mission brief similar to those used by most NATO forces. This briefing includes information on current enemy activity, what your own forces are up to and a very detailed breakdown of what the mission objectives are and how they will be achieved.

Once the mission has been accepted veteran wargamers are in for a real surprise, because the game switches to the map screen – a map without hexagons. Patriot's attitude is: *Real battle fields*

don't have big hexagons painted all over them, so why should this.

You don't make up your battle plan up on the way to the battle field. Before the game starts you must lay down your plan of action. Each of the units under your command must be given a destination, a route and a posture.

This doesn't mean you have to spend hours laboriously issuing orders to every last unit on the map. Patriot pays great attention to the way armies are structured. An army is made up of several corps, each consisting of divisions which in turn will have brigades, regiments, battalions, companies and finally platoons.

So you could order your entire army to march through Kuwait City, or just tell one regiment to go and liberate the place.

The way orders are given is very different as well. Because you don't have any hexes to move through, units must be given waypoints to follow until they arrive at their destination.

Planned movements

This means that the map gets covered with really impressive looking arrows highlighting your planned movements. Units can also be issued with boundaries which they must remain within in order for you to concentrate your forces.

Units also have a *Posture* setting, which refers to

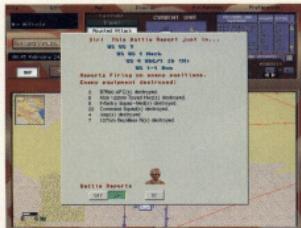


...official NATO military symbols and boundary lines? Bringing the lines closer together will enable you to concentrate your force's firepower



For those who find two screens just too complicated to work with, there's the full screen map option but the detail is still the same

reviewed by Jason Carter



Throughout the action, units will send battle reports, but when they begin to get annoying you can turn them off



Patriot includes a huge database of information on just about every piece of military equipment in the world



One nil, one nil! Kinda makes ya' proud to be an American don't it?

a unit's current state of activeness. For example, if posture was set to travel mode, the unit in question would move at maximum speed but would also be very vulnerable.

If it was launching a dismounted attack, it would be very effective in combat but not moving very fast.

Air/artillery support

As if all this wasn't enough to worry about, would-be Schwarzkops also have to assign air and artillery support to units and rearrange the command structure where necessary.

Once the master plan is finally formulated, the battle can be set under way.

At this point you could put your feet up and see how the battle unfolds, or you can get right into the

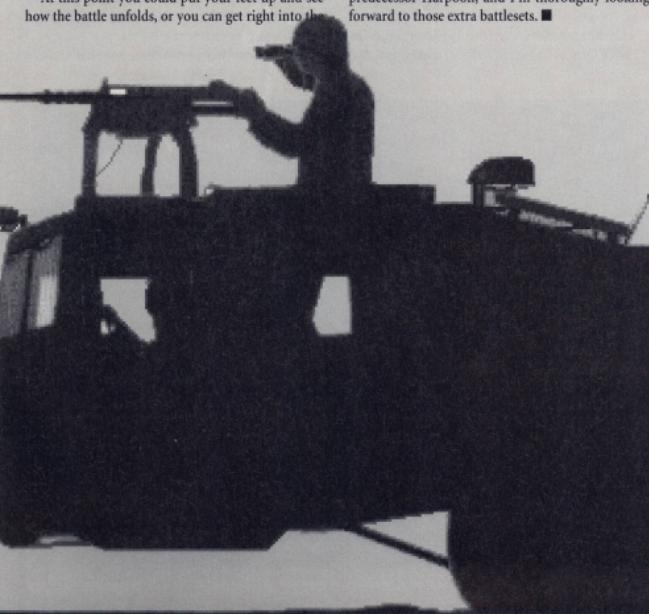
thick of it, issuing new orders as situations develop.

Either way the plans laid down before the action starts will usually have the greatest effect on the final outcome.

I've probably made everything sound very complicated, in which case I'll have done my job, because this is a very complicated game. But it's not completely inaccessible, so newcomers should not be deterred.

I would recommend approaching this game with extreme caution though. Patriot is so full of features and detail that I couldn't possibly hope to cover all its aspects.

This is the definitive land-based wargame. I fully expect it to achieve the same cult following as its predecessor Harpoon, and I'm thoroughly looking forward to those extra battlesets. ■



REPLAY

LOWDOWN

Program	PATRIOT
Price	£44.99
Works on	386SX or higher
Base memory	585K
Total memory	4Mb (2700k EMS)
Sound support	SoundBlaster, Adlib
Control	Mouse
Best control	Mouse
Hard drive	7Mb
Graphic card supported	512k VESA compatible VGA
Game graphics	VGA/SVGA

Contact - Electronic Arts - 0753 549442

RATINGS

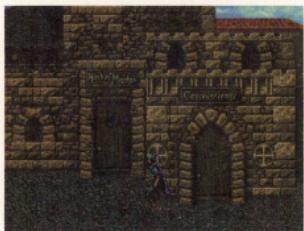
Visuals	73%
Audio	51%
Interest	92%
Adrenaline	48%

OVERALL 85%

7 CITIES *of gold*



First, a visit to the harbour master in order to decide which goods are going to be needed



The arcade element livens up an otherwise dull job – shopping for supplies



The harbour master has lots on offer – you'll need supplies and trade goods

A YEAR or so ago, a couple of films provoked interest in the times of discovery of 15th century Spain. The most famous of all of the explorers was Christopher Columbus, who, Hollywood would have us believe, discovered most of the world on his own. This is obviously not true. We all know that there was at least two of them.

Long before the lager louts invaded the Costa Del Sol, they set sail for pastures new, to discover new worlds and bring back new treasures, mostly in the name of science and religion.

With them, they took explorers to map out the country, soldiers for protection – and to enslave anyone who didn't agree with them, clergy to spread the word and horses to carry equipment and men.

This often bloody pretence is the premise for 7 Cities Of Gold. You are the explorer and the

world is there to be discovered. Visit the King and Queen and they will give their blessing and between 1,500 and 2,500 gold coins, depending on the level you start at, with which to finance an expedition. With this, off you go the harbour master to buy a ship and stock it for the long journey.

Fort building

Here, once you've parted with the cash for a ship, you can start to stock up with men and equipment. Explorers are needed to map out the new found land, so you need at least one or you can't set sail. Soldiers are required to build forts and give you an edge in combat, so the more you take, the better.

Clergymen are essential if you are going to set up a mission, so, as to win you have to establish three forts, a colony and a mission, these are a must as well. The last requirement is horses.

Yes, I know they're not men, but that's where



Choose what you want according to the capacity of the ship and the money available

reviewed by Tony Kaye



Now the ship's ready to sail so clamber on board



Sail towards the West to discover the New World



When you meet the chief, try offering him a gift

they appear in the menu. They can carry a lot, and men on horseback move faster and consume less food than those on foot, so a good supply of horses is definitely recommended.

You must also stock up with food (to stop you all starving), Old World plants and animals (for gifts and trading, but not food) and arms for defence and trading, too. Once you've finished shopping, it's time to set sail.

Conquer worlds

When you reach the New World, you can explore and conquer. Meeting with the tribes can be hazardous to your health and, I'll guarantee that the first encounter ends in your death, so now is probably a good time to save the game.

Before you get killed, find the chief of the tribe and try to trade with him. You have the option to offer to trade, threaten, give a gift, amaze the chief

with some simple Western magic trick, beg with him or leave.

At the end of the encounter, you will either have made a friend or an enemy of the tribe. Men and goods will be available if you play it right and a well stocked ship will be well rewarded upon your return to the motherland.

After 10 trips to the New World, establish all objectives or you can't win the game. You can continue your voyages and discoveries, but the king and queen won't grant an audience any more.

The graphics are not the best you'll see (and certainly not the worst), but there is an appeal to this game that will bring you back. The concept of trading with alien races and getting the best deal is not new, but this combination is a winner for me.



Keep your eyes open for enemy ambushes or, unfortunately, the game will end very quickly

Pirates Gold! - Microprose - 0666 504326

Just like 7 Cities, Pirates has been updated, though to SVGA graphics, which are certainly better than in 7 Cities. There's more fighting in Pirates and less trading, and obviously no new territories to discover.

Reviewed: September 1993

The Patriarch - Daze - 071-328 2762

It's the season for sailing strategy games. This one was a definite trading challenge, set in medieval Germany. The good news is that all these games are worth buying and playing.

Reviewed: October 1993

Civilisation - Microprose - 0666 50326

The classic Sid Meier game also offers exploration of unexplored worlds but is graphically cruder and the emphasis is on discoveries.

Reviewed: December 1992

REPLAY

LOWDOWN

Program	7 Cities of Gold
Price	£39.99
Works on	Any PC
Recommended	386 or higher
Base memory	580k
Total memory	640k
Sound support	SoundBlaster, AdLib,
Control	Keyboard or joystick
Best control	Keyboard
Hard drive	3.5Mb
Game graphics	VGA

Contact - Electronic Arts - 0753 549442

RATINGS

Visuals	75%
Audio	79%
Interest	90%
Adrenaline	55%

OVERALL 82%



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RS4



reviewed by *Duncan Evans*

AS we sit at our desks, struggling to find space to install the latest 20Mb monster to come through the door, some of us sit back while it's decompressing and ponder, wistfully, on the days when a game came on one disk - or two if it was full of pictures.

Underneath my desk is a pile of budget games that come on one or two disks - half don't support sound cards and many of the others claim EGA graphics as state of the art.

It was while undergoing more installation trauma that I decided to move the mouse family that had settled there and have a look at some of the games. After all, a game doesn't need blockbuster graphics to make for great gameplay does it?

I had a quick look at Midwinter II and Loom from Kixx XL which were both fairly decent titles in their time, and only look slightly dated now, but I pressed on, determined to find one disk offering that supported feeble graphics cards as well as EGA and VGA, and didn't need a hard drive to run from.

Only International Tennis out of the selection did need a hard drive, but then it also came on one disk and does support CGA as well as VGA.

BUDGET *bonanza*

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PRICE: £2.99

SUPPLIER: DAZE MARKETING

TEL: 071-328 2762

THERE was a hilarious press release came with this game, and without going detail the gist of it was that the new budget range from Daze is available by direct mail order - so give 'em a ring for their address - for the unbelievably cheap price of £2.99. Cor blimey, guvnor. Now that's what I call cheap. The one we liked the best was Crystals of Arborea, the prequel to Ishar: Fortress thingy. Yup, there's 3-D movement around a decently realistic landscape, lots of party members and there's even spells. And fighting. What more do you want? At this price it's a giveaway, but remember, this special offer only lasts until New Year's Eve 1993 at which point Daze will have sold out.

Right, the rest of the stuff in the series, because at this price...and so on... are Metal Mutant (hmm - okay beat 'em up), Super Ski 2 (loads-a-laughs), Storm Master (very pretty), Starblade (yes, well, the kids might like it) and Boston Bomb Club (or Bomb Jack if you can remember that far back).



INTERNATIONAL TENNIS

PRICE: £9.99

SUPPLIER: ZEPPELIN

TEL: 091-385 7755

EASILY the most modern looking piece of kit in this mini round up, International Tennis is actually quite good. It has joystick support and VGA graphics if you want them, one or two player options and a gameplay that's dead easy to pick up. Serve, rush into the net, slap the ball down the sidelines for a winner. And that was just the computer.

There's three types of court, male or female players, doubles games and a mix of human and computer player doubles games. The only problem was that it was a wee bit too quick to be really playable on my 486 66MHz beast and on most 486DX machines, but anything below that and you should be well satisfied.



BLADE WARRIOR

PRICE: £9.99

SUPPLIER: ZEPPELIN

TEL: 091-385 7755

THIS is quite an old - circa '89 - game that first appeared on the Amiga, where, to be perfectly honest, I was a bit dubious about it anyway. The shadowy foreground action is a novelty, the non-scrolling backgrounds a disappointment and the EGA graphics a bit on the chunky side. The EGA/VGA sticker on the front is a mystery since there are certainly no VGA graphics anywhere.

So what, the plot is all about mad demons, tight fisted wizards who could help, but need to be bribed before they'll hand over the bits of demon-killing artefact all games like this require. If Tennis was quick this ran like a berserker, so 386 people and below for this effort.

It doesn't look overly nice, but with its chunky style, constant combat, lurking demon - called Murk - and magical potion elements there's a fair slab of game in there at a knock down price.

STRONG

bold

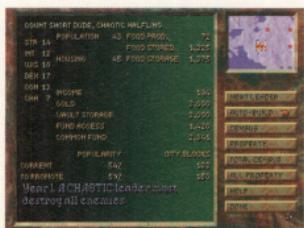


Two young clerics survey the serene country side, little knowing that they're about to be conscripted into a horribly bloody war (hee hee)



On this day it was declared to all the realms that Lance the Lunatic shall henceforth hold the wretched County in recognition of certain unpaid debts.

Promotions can be gained by crushing all your enemies into the ground and trampling over their bodies. Alternatively, you could build a nice place to live for your people



Each of your leaders has set of attributes, and each of their subjects has the same details, but every character has its own experience points

AS a rule I generally tend to steer clear of pixie games - I find the majority excessively dull. Stronghold, however, despite being absolutely chock full of dwarves, elves, wizards and the like, is simply one of the most compellingly addictive challenges I have ever come across.

It calls itself a Kingdom Simulator, and, unfortunately, no matter how sad this may sound, it's probably the only accurate description.

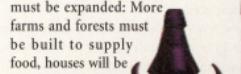
The game begins with a large, empty, polygon landscape with hills, rivers, mountains, trees and lakes liberally scattered around the place. It's then up to you to create five characters, and decide where to place their various strongholds.

The first of these castles will be where your leader is based, and the other four must be placed fairly close by.

The characters are the standard D&D collection of mages, elves, dwarves and various other misfits, each of which has its own set of statistics which affect the game in various ways.

Once the first five strongholds have been placed, their populations will begin to grow at varying rates, and the inhabitants of any town will always be the same character class as their leader.

As the population grows, that town must be expanded: More farms and forests must be built to supply food, houses will be



Your subjects will always have plenty of advice to offer, as if it's any of their business how you run the Empire

needed along with all the other things that your average fantasy world city requires. This aspect of the gameplay is very similar to Civilization.

Players whose leaders are either Neutral or Chaotic must destroy all the other strongholds on the map. On the easier levels this doesn't present too much of a problem, because there are only a few orc and goblin towns here and there. But on the more difficult levels things get pretty hairy - there's a town full of horrible monsters hiding behind practically every rock.

Fighting talk

It's here that the choice of characters really begins to pay off, or not, as the case may be. In one of my early games I chose five fighters as my leaders, pretty confident that I'd be able to handle everything the wilderness could throw at me.

Sure enough, when I built my first tower I spotted a gang of wood golems loitering around looking decidedly shifty. Having sent off an army of 5th level warriors to give them a good pasting, I sat back, prepared to watch the ensuing



One of the many and varied nasties that can be found loitering with intent around the kingdom

reviewed by *Lance Concannon***Yikes! It's attack of the flamethrowing sparrows**

massacre. Unfortunately, I hadn't read the manual all the way through. I had no idea that wood golems were completely immune to non-magical weapons. It's important to start the game with a good mix of characters to stand a chance of killing all the bad guys. The reason I find the game so addictive is the amount of variation to be found. As well as managing strongholds, battles must be fought each requiring different tactics.

Sometimes you can win with brute force. The benefits of 50 high level fighters should not be underestimated, but at other times fighters will be completely useless and the only way to win will be to use elves and mages. Every character created in the cities will have a set of statistics similar to those in the D&D role-playing games, and

**Hello, is this the Selafield Visitor's Centre?**

their performance on the battlefield is very much affected by these.

Much of the game's addictiveness owes to the fact that you can improve your characters with experience. The more goblins you bash, the more powerful your characters become.

Big city pleasures

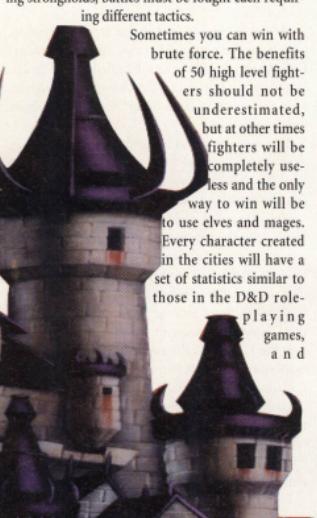
If your leader's character is either Lawful or Neutral he will have to achieve the rank of Emperor to complete the game. Promotion comes by killing lots of bad guys or building really big and pleasant cities, so it's up to you how you go about it. A mixture of both methods is usually the best course of action.

The landscape is made up of polygon graphics, with sprites for trees, rocks, characters and so on. On the whole, I think the game really could have been a lot better as far as visuals are concerned.

The battles are hilarious, consisting of sprites for the various character classes hurling spells and various other projectiles all over the place and hitting each other with whatever weapons they're armed with.

The sound effects add a lot to the battle sequences, with swords clashing, arrows whistling through the air and spells making a concoction of weird and wonderful noises. Stronghold's best weapons are its addictiveness and variety. If you want a game that you just won't be able to leave alone this is it.

Thank goodness that's over – I can get a good half hour of beastly slaying in before I go home. ■

**The 3-D battle unfolds with reports alerting your forces****...and this is a big map**

The pyramid shaped thing is actually a temple where clerics can pray and learn to club the crud out of those filthy heretics

Civilization – Microprose – 0666 504326

Sid Meier's classic empire building game, perhaps a little long in the tooth now, but Civilization 2000 is being bolted together as we speak. If I had to pick one I'd probably plump for this.

Reviewed: December 1992

Powermonger – Electronic Arts – 0753 549442

The less well known sort of sequel to Populous, great fun, but with a much more military bias, pretty limited compared to Stronghold though and very repetitive.

Castles – Electronic Arts – 0753 549442

A medieval castle building sort of game, funny enough. Games tend to drag on a bit, and the combat could be much more interactive. Everybody loved it at first, but not one of life's classics.

REPLAY

LOWDOWN

Program	STRONGHOLD
Price	£34.99
Works on	386 or higher
Base memory	585K
Total memory	2Mb
Sound support	SoundBlaster, AdLib, PAS, Roland
Control	Mouse
Best control	Mouse
Hard drive	6Mb
Game graphics	VGA

Contact – US Gold – 021-625 3388

RATINGS

Visuals	78%
Audio	83%
Interest	92%
Adrenaline	85%

OVERALL 90%

JACK the ripper

Jack the Ripper



You must wind your way through the streets of London in search of the murderous Ripper



The gruesome murders occur regularly as you make your way through the game



Clues can be found at various locations and they can be useful in helping to solve the murder

JACK the Ripper is an adventure game based around the mystery that surrounds the legend of the famous East End murderer. It is set in the 1880s, with you taking the role of John Doe, the detective who is most famous for conclusively failing to find out the identity of the Ripper.

The idea is very simple. Travel to various locations around the East End of London and interrogate witnesses and suspects. Once you have done this and gleaned all the possible information from the sources, there should be enough evidence available to make a conclusive decision about who the murderer is.

At the beginning you arrive at the scene of the first murder. Plenty of suspects and key witnesses are available, but too many to interview before they all start leaving. You have no power to keep them there, so many of them have to be chased to get their statements.

Travelling around

This is done by clicking on a Go To menu, which presents a map of Victorian London, and clicking on the name of the location to travel to. This is quite a neat way of finding your way around and breaks up the locations so that there is at least some feeling of travelling around.

Unfortunately, the locations are uninspiring. The 16 colour EGA graphics make the dark streets of London look more like a Gothic toyland, and the presentation of the characters is similarly basic.

For a game that places a lot of emphasis on the



Use the map to travel around the different places available in your search for clues

time scale involved (you arrive on the scene of the first murder and the others follow on at the appropriate time), the scenes are not effected by the forces of nature, and look as bright at night as they do during the day. The music was equally unexciting, and only makes an appearance when you discover a clue.

However, graphics and sound aren't everything, and how the game plays is also important. Unfortunately, this is also handled rather badly. Interrogation is based on the characters telling you what they want to, with no option of asking them further questions.

This makes you feel more like a Victorian agony aunt than one of the great detectives of Scotland Yard. You can then pick out certain parts of characters' statements and save them in your notebook.

However, you cannot pick any part of a statement, only the bits that the program believes are important, so this becomes almost an exercise in random clicking to see which parts will highlight, than using skill to pluck out the relevant bits.

Once you have gleaned all the information you think is needed, retire to your study and ponder over the identity of the murderer. This is not easy, as there are plenty of suspects, and not an awful lot to go on.

Luckily there's a blackboard on to which you can transfer the sentences from notes. Transfer two statements that fit together and you come up with a third that is a summary of the two and should go a step closer to finding the murderous scoundrel.

For example, with an eyewitness who claims the



The various information windows can be rearranged to suit your own preferences

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PC Review

The Complete Space Experience for IBM PC and Amiga

*Elite on Amiga versions

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MICROPROSE

ORIGIN

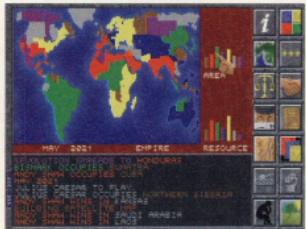
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GLOBAL domination



Use the world map to plan your campaign and take control of the globe



At its most detailed, the game can be battled out by your various individual units



Build up your forces and invade neighbouring countries with your stockpile of arms

GLOBAL Domination is a strategy game in which the player must compete against other human or computer opponents to achieve control of the world.

It is set in the near future, which means that you have a whole range of conventional weapons at your disposal, which you must use to annihilate the opposition.

Nuclear weapons are out though, which I presume is simply to make the game playable as opposed to one which would otherwise finish very quickly, leaving not all that much of a globe left to dominate.

The computer controls famous figures from history who have been rebuilt from their DNA, so you find yourself battling against some unlikely combinations like Genghis Kahn and John Wayne.

Pacts and alliances can be made with these characters, though they are not necessarily to be trusted. You also have the option of playing on our world or terra forming another one.

The most interesting aspect is that you can play on several different levels to suit different styles and preferences. The simplest level is a board game, similar in style to Risk or Diplomacy.

On these terms it works very well, as armies can simply be stockpiled, and ploughed into enemy territories when you feel aggressive. The software then works out the outcome of battles

and will announce the victor.

At the next level of detail, the types of weapons can be chosen. If your enemies have a strong air-force, defensive air weapons are a must. The computer will then work out the outcome of battles but will give a running commentary of what is being done by each unit so the players can see how well their individual forces fare against the opposition.

The most complex and detailed level involves moving individual forces around a battlefield that represents the area you're fighting over.

This is my favourite setting as you are involved with all aspects of the battles, and the strategies and tactics used at a local level are as important as plans for global supremacy.

With a game such as this – set on such a wide scale as a whole world – there is a certain lack of realism. The rules restrict you in ways which may not be realistic but which do make the game more playable.

Likewise, when you are fighting small scale battles over individual countries the battlefields are fairly standard and don't really have any relevance to the area being fought over. As far as this game is concerned, there are forests in Iraq and a distinct lack of snow in Canada.

However, this really doesn't matter. If your tastes are limited to the type of wargame where statistics rule, this is not for you. For the rest of us, this game is very well suited. It's fun and it doesn't drag you down into having to learn complicated rules.

Civilised detail

There is as much a place for this kind of challenge as there is for detailed and historically realistic wargames, as has been proved in the past by the likes of Civilisation.

The closest comparison you could find to Global is in a board game, though it is easier and quicker to learn than Risk, while, at its greatest level of depth, it has everything that is missing from Diplomacy.

The graphics are adequate, changing distinctly across the different styles of play, though after a while it is easy to start ignoring them anyway. Playability is good enough to draw you away from mere good looks.



A view of the detailed battlefield showing terrain types and the location of the opposing sides

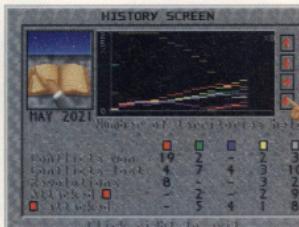
reviewed by Andrew Shaw



You can choose to let the computer resolve battles indicating how each force is doing



The pre-combat screen, showing where the engagement is about to take place



You can make pacts and alliances with your opponents though beware of placing too much trust.

The same applies to the sound. At its simplest, there's quiet background music and the odd beep if an illegal move is tried. In the detailed battle, whirling helicopter blades and firing machine guns can be heard.

Easy access

The interface is friendly. Completely mouse driven it consists of an icon bar down the right hand side of the screen which accesses all the parts of the game. The icons change their function for different aspects so that area of the screen looks similar throughout.

The bottom of the screen is given over to the

message bar which indicates all the moves that have been made. This can be scrolled backwards or forwards so that previous moves can be examined.

Again though, this is really just dressing. It's nice to have these things, but this is the sort of challenge that gets people hooked without having to resort to anything too fancy.

This is a good game that should keep anyone who plays it going for quite a while. The fact that it can be played in numerous ways and supports modem and linked PC play, means it has a very wide target audience. And if the idea of ruling the world turns you on, give this a try.

Civilisation - Microprose - 0666 504326

Sid Meir's world domination game, which you'll probably prefer if you're more interested in overall development instead of simply invading your neighbours.

Reviewed: December 1992

Return To Atlantis - Shareware

Simple board game type of computer war game, with the advantage that you can get it cheaply via your favourite shareware library.

Risk - Virgin - 081-960 2255

The official digital version of the popular board game. Get this if you would rather have the name and prefer to do without the extra bits you have to know about in Global Domination

REPLAY



See how you're faring against opponents by consulting records

LOWDOWN

GLOBAL DOMINATION	
Program	£34.99
Price	286+
Works on	386 16MHz+
Recommended	560k
Base memory	640k (500k XMS for sound samples)
Sound support	AdLib, Aria, Roland, SoundBlaster, PC speaker
Control	Mouse, keyboard
Best control	Mouse
Hard drive	3.5Mb
Game graphics	VGA
Contact	Impressions - 071-351 2133

RATINGS

Visuals	73%
Audio	77%
Interest	89%
Adrenaline	80%

OVERALL 85%

THESE are only one soccer game on the PC, and that's Sensible. As beginners to the game can doubtless testify it's easy enough taking possession of the ball, but it's rather more tricky to get it in the back of the net. This is therefore the guide to scoring, and keeping the ball out.

SENSIBLE

Duncan Evans shows you how to score with Renegade's fantastic football sim

Angled bend



Approach the goal on the angle



Press and hold fire, move the joystick to bend the ball

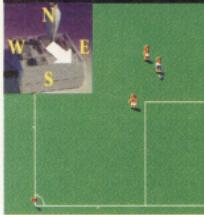


Keep bending the ball until it hits the net

This is very similar to the angled bend, but because you are nearer to the by line it's necessary to slice the ball across and into the goal. Defensively try to

herd the attacker towards the corner, or if you see the shot coming and you have a defender on the line try to head it clear.

Angled slice



From the wing, run on the angle towards goal



Press fire, hold, and immediately move the joystick to slice the ball across goal



Keep the bend on and watch the ball fly into the far corner of the net

Chip shot



Half way down the pitch before the goal comes into view press and hold fire



As soon as the ball starts to move drop the joystick into the central position

Often bamboozles the goalkeeper even when the ball is coming straight at him, but there's always the problem of simply seeing the ball roll away from the striker. Defensively, unless your opponent is particularly proficient at this shot don't worry - it's pretty hard to get right.



If you've got it into the air the ball will sail goalwards. Start moving down the pitch again just in case it hits the bar

SOCER

player's guide

Hit and hope

There are some games where you think you're never going to score. There's a long shot tactic worth trying, especially on icy pitches. When defending try to herd them into the middle or block the shot.



Way out from goal faced with defenders



Press fire, hold it, instantly reverse the stick and hold it there

Frontal bend

Even the defence expects you to score from here. Bend the ball all the way across the goalkeeper, or if running central, lightly bend it into the corner. Defensively dive in to tackle, even giving a penalty.



Press fire and then immediately bend the ball across the goalie



Keep the bend on and watch the ball fly into the corner

Corner kicks

Initially one of the most difficult positions to score from, dividends can be reaped by keeping calm. To defend simply wait for the kick then move out towards the ball, kicking it as soon as possible.

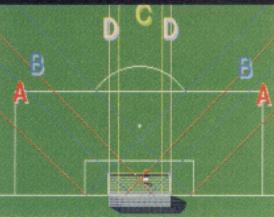


Make sure your kicker is pointing towards the goal and then centre the joystick. Press fire and hold it down while keeping the joystick centred...



...until the ball lands in the area and then move the joystick south either running the ball into the net or kicking it in if there's no chance of fouling an opponent

Scoring channels



There are four main scoring areas, illustrated A, B, C, D. As you can see A and B slightly overlap and D is right next to C. Don't worry, practise and the right shot will become automatic. A is for slicing the ball across goal, B is for bending it into goal, C is for bending the ball across the goalkeeper and D is a sharp low shot position.

Other hints

- If running towards goal just inside the post try hitting a straight ahead low shot from the edge of the box. Often the goalie will stand there like a lemon and watch it go in.
- On icy pitches long range shots will skid off the surface and make the goalkeeper's life very hard.
- On a muddy or sticky pitch try punting the ball into the box rather than running to a scoring position with it. The ball will stick there and the first player to get to it can either ram the ball home or clear it.
- When the ball is close to the goal, but not within obvious reach of the goalie, he will often stand still leaving a chance for you to simply run the ball or tap it in.
- Get a joystick splitter for two human player games.
- Use an analogue-digital converter to use your fave Amiga/ST joystick.
- Two player score to emulate: Duncan 9 (PC Home) – Warren (PC today) 0
- Things to look forward to: World of Sensible Soccer in Spring '94.

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As an ongoing feature for the games section we are now listing every game we have ever reviewed. New products will be added as they are covered, to give you a comprehensive ongoing guide

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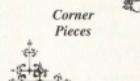
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FOR some reason the most impressive and, shall we say, adventurous CD products invariably involve murder, mystery and some lunatic waiting around the corner with a large axe or other suitable instrument of death.

We've seen this trend in the *Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective* series and of course in the trend-setting *7th Guest*. The latest in this kind of

Sunday afternoon detective show is *Who Killed Sam Rupert?*

There's the usual collection of entertainment, plus pictures and geographical offerings too. Possibly the strangest release is *Motor Stars* which comes complete with a plastic model.

Read on and enter the wonderful world of multimedia.

Motor Stars

Price: £59.95
 Supplier: Revell, Foster House, Maxwell Road, Borehamwood, Herts WD6 1JB
 Tel: 081-207 1213

If you're one of those people who has lots of pictures of young women on the wall, look elsewhere – there are plenty of CD-Roms for you. If, however, the walls are adorned by photos of cars, take a look at *Motor Stars* as it's probably right up your street (pun intended).

This is a CD from model-kit makers Revell, so it comes as no surprise that the sizable box includes a kit car – a Porsche 911. It hasn't just been thrown in for the sake of it, however, it's all part of the package.

Motor Stars is many things. For a start it's a race game, albeit an average one. Your first task is to race one of four sports cars against the clock to one of the four

race tracks. Go too fast, and you run the risk of being caught by the cops and you'll lose valuable time. Try to outrun them, and they'll set up a road block. Nasty.

Manage to get to the track and you'll have an opportunity to tweak the car – tyre settings, spoiler height and so on, and race around the track proper.

The driving game is very reminiscent of 4D Sports Driving from Mindscape. The graphics aren't brilliant and it's lightning fast, making steering very difficult. This is a bit of a problem, as when the damage meter reaches maximum you die and have to start again.

The presentation is rounded off by some animations with recorded speech. The police will taunt you if you're caught, while the guy at the petrol station asks what you want, and offers a tow after a crash. This is entertaining for a while, but soon irritates.

So what about this model car – where does this fit in? ➤



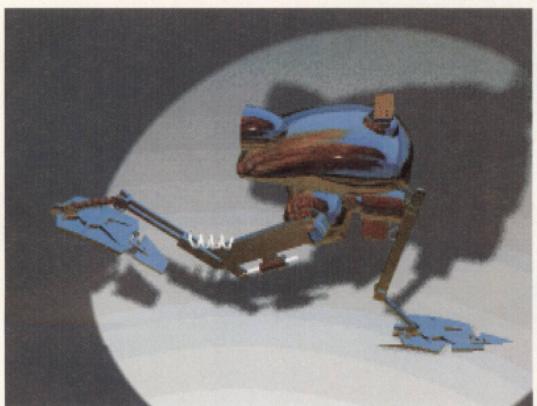
The Revell Motor Stars showroom



The cops have set up a road block on the way to the race track

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Walkthroughs and Flybys CD



Price: £26.95

Supplier: Unica, Unica House, Mowbray Street, Stockport, Cheshire SK1 3EJ

Tel: 061-429 0241

GET the neighbours round, dim the lights, turn up the volume and put Walkthroughs and Flybys into your CD-Rom drive (not necessarily in that order). Yes, this is one of those CDs that shows your Multimedia PC at its best.

If you have seen the Hot Stuff series of discs you'll know what to expect here, as this is basically more of the same. Only more so. There's a total of 538Mb of animations, demos and SoundBlaster music.

Walkthroughs and Flybys takes the idea a little further, as it comes with a 150-page book published by Waite Group Press, which explains how the disc was put together, gives an explanation about the major demos, credits the authors and explains some of the techniques used to create the animations. It's a good read, although it's more like a reference title than a book.

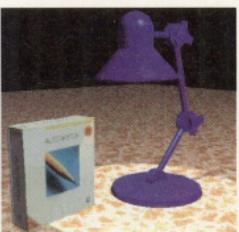
The usual problem with this type of disc is that the front end is poor and the files are arranged badly. In this case, I'm pleased to report that a very good menu system – Automenü – has been used. This makes finding specific animations and demos a cinch.

To get the best out of this package we'd recommend a 486-based machine with a SoundBlaster Pro, although a 386 with SoundBlaster compatible card will do. A double-speed CD-Rom drive is not essential as the demos can easily be copied to hard disk from the menu system.

While this disc won't suit everyone – let's face it Flybys and Walkthroughs is of no practical use – it is highly entertaining and the best of its type available. My only concern is that many of the animations seen here have already appeared elsewhere.



Ray-traced warriors do battle



Well, aside from the driving game, a huge section of the CD is taken by 3-D animations showing how to assemble and paint the model kit car.

The exploded views are really very good. There's also a in-built catalogue of Revell's kits, "fun facts" on the cars and general tips on modelling. Lovely.

As a driving game it doesn't come close to F1 Grand Prix. As a whole package it's probably more suited to children than adults, despite the high price. Expect Motor Stars to be well advertised at Christmas.

Jutland



Price: £34.99

Supplier: Metric, Unit 312, Victory House, Sommers Road North, Portsmouth PO1 1PJ

Tel: 0705 8729

JUTLAND is named after the great World War I naval battle that took place in the North Sea in 1916, between the British (the good guys) and the Germans (not the good guys – they started it after all).

It should come as no surprise therefore that Jutland – the game – is a naval simulator based around that time. No nuclear weapons here.

If you've seen the submarine game Silent Service you'll know what to expect. Let's put it another way –



Cor blimey Guv', come and have a look at these two

The Quick Reference guide lists over 100 short-cut keys. This is no arcade game.

Skipping between various locations on ship – the bridge, torpedo room, map room and so on – you gain information and give orders. The object of most missions is to find an enemy ship and err... blow it up.

As it is tradition in these things you can choose to be part of the Royal Navy or, if you're a complete traitor, step aboard a ship in the Imperial Fleet.

To justify its existence on CD-Rom lots of animations and pictures have been added. The SoundBlaster music is also worthy of a mention as at times it is nothing short of fantastic. The worst bit is the game itself – it's just plain dull.

A lot of time and effort has obviously gone into this – the on-screen manual alone consists of more than 200 pages of historical information and pictures – and all the in-game ships and missions are based on the real thing.

But if this is supposed to be life-like, how come I've just spent 20 minutes shelling my own navy to bits, without any form of retaliation? And how come you can never crash into another ship? Even Wing Commander can cope with these sort of occurrences.

If you're after a nautical simulator, take my advice: Save your war bonds and look around elsewhere. There are better games than this.



Eric the Unready

Price: £34.99
 Supplier: Accolade, Bowling House, Point Pleasant, Wandsworth, London SW18 1PE
 Tel: 081-877 0880

ERIC the Unready annoyed me straight away – it copied 17Mb of files to my space-starved hard disk and then had the audacity to ask me to adjust my config.sys file. Why can't you do it then? Cah!

The box states that the game features "Hi-res 256-colour Super VGA" which it does. But you have to choose between 800x600 in 16 colours or 640x480 in 256 colours, and only six type of graphics boards are supported. My card, a Trident, is listed but the screen still regularly corrupted.

It's an adventure set in medieval times. Unfortunately the user interface is nearly as old. Lists of words appear for you to select from to form sentences. I thought I'd seen the end of that.

Just to complete the picture, you ought to know that the programmers have injected some humour into the storyline. The not-very-funny variety. Why do so many games of this type try to be funny?

I could see why real die-hard adventure fans may like this – the graphics are reasonable and the puzzles and in-built games are mildly entertaining and quite difficult, but this title doesn't even come close to using the potential of CD-Rom technology.

Actually Accolade seem to be a little guilty about this as they've gone to the trouble of including small demos of some of their other games such as Spellcasting 101 and Gateway.

They've also copied the main game files into a back-up directory, effectively doubling the amount of data on the disc. But hey, we're not fooled – this release is a waste of money. Don't buy it.

Who Killed Sam Rupert?

Price: £22
 Supplier: Magic Media, 24-26 Friern Park N. Finchley, London N12 9DA
 Tel: 081-343 9933

AS you might have guessed by the title of this game and that fact that this page is for CD reviews, Who killed Sam Rupert is a CD-Rom-based detective game. Nothing new in that – we've already had the Sherlock Holmes trio to contend with.

Unlike those, though, there is just the one mystery to solve here and we don't need to tell you what that is? The object is simple – you've got six hours to solve the crime, and it's spread over two stages.

The first is to gain as much information as possible

London – The multimedia tour

Price: £57.58
 Supplier: Unica, Unica House, Mowbray Street, Stockport SK1 3EJ
 Tel: 061-429 0241

LONDON – The Multimedia tour is another title in the MDI range that also includes Dinosaurs and ITN World News (reviewed last issue). As the title says, this disc takes you on a tour of London "one of the World's premiere Tourist Destinations".

The CD is split into four sections – West, West End, The City and Sights and Sounds. A total of 50 minutes of video footage is included as well as 20 minutes of CD audio including narration, and more than 460 colour photographs.

The interface of this Windows application is fairly good. Locations can be accessed by going on tours around areas, or direct by using the A-Z of destinations.

The video footage is generally entertaining although you'll need a fast drive to appreciate it. The subject matter is sometimes a little bizarre – we are told that a favourite pastime in the capital is visiting one of the many public houses "renowned for their welcoming hospitality and friendliness".

Then we're shown inside a pub in Soho to meet the landlord of the Hop Blossom "known for miles around for his



about Sam, his murder and, of course, the suspects. Each task takes a set period, so you need to plan ahead or your six hours will be up. The only task which is free is the report of the murder. You can watch this over and over, without a time loss.

When confident you have good information you progress to the second stage which starts with a press conference. Answer some questions satisfactorily and you get to the real action – the warrant, the arrest and the court case.

There is plenty of animation, although the quality is pretty poor and the window size is small. Analysing the crime scene is implemented well – zoom for close-ups on the dead body. There isn't any gore, however, so it isn't unsuitable for children.

The point-and-click interface is reasonable, but the game is spoilt badly by its speed – it really is very slow. The fact that this is a Windows product doesn't help matters.

The sub-title is Virtual Murder 1, so I think we can assume that the American designers will be shipping over more titles in the future. If they can improve the speed and the animation, as in the Sherlock Holmes series, we may find a decent game bursting to get out. As it stands, it's another case of nice idea, shame about the implementation. ■



Select your destination

sense of humour and his friendly banter". You couldn't get this sort of experience from a book.

The same can be said of the sounds – select an icon and you can hear the chimes of Big Ben or an underground train coming into the station and so on.

For the foreigner, this disc offers a good broad view of the city. I am not so sure that there is enough here for the home market as the subject matter is not specific enough and the lack of street or underground maps is a little surprising. A paperback guide in the box would have been a nice addition – a missed opportunity here.

I think this title may have been rushed out, possibly to catch this year's tourists, as it has a few bugs.

These are not enough to crash the program but are nevertheless unwelcome. London is a good CD-Rom but by no means perfect.

NEXT MONTH

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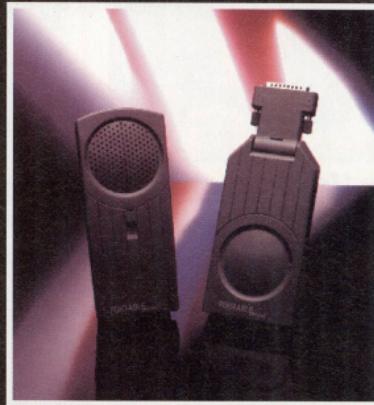
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10 10 for English

BECAUSE the National Curriculum is so complicated, it is far easier to let somebody else worry about your offspring's education, and leave it to the schools to decide what and what not to teach your children.

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Age
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For the student, there are high score tables for each game, which provide a bit of healthy competition between players and motivation to continue playing and trying to achieve better scores.

A certificate can also be printed showing in which areas of the curriculum the student excels. All the games can be played by up to four people at a time, allowing for simultaneous group activities. The six

games are all very different, some being better than others, though all come across as being well designed and thought out.

The first game, *Sniper*, is an exercise in building up sentences or phrases from a selection of words that scroll up and down the sides of the screen like targets at a rifle range.

A bar across the top of the screen contains some kind of jumbled up sentence or other exercise, and the words must be selected in the right order from those available. Clues are given if a wrong word is chosen, but get it wrong after this and a new problem appears.

I think this is the weakest game because the words cannot be chosen until they appear on the screen. This means that the bonus points attainable for speed are irrelevant, as the computer does not always give you the word you need straightaway.

Covering up

Cover Up is a more interesting game. Two sets of words pair up in some way by rhyming or having the same meaning and you have to click on the two words that are related.

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Andrew Shaw tests his English against the National Curriculum with a recently launched educational package

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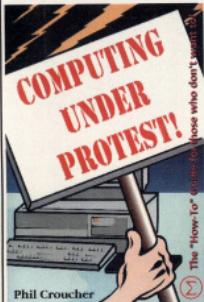


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Punctuation	3.3n-1				3.5d-2	3.7c-2
Names			3.3n-1	2.5e-3	3.4d-3	4.2c-2
Verbs	3.3n-1			3.3n-1		3.3e-2
Adjectives		2.1b-1				3.4e-2
Language use	2.7n-1	2.3n-1			4.7c-3	3.5e-1
Weeks	2.2b-1			4.3c-1	3.7c-4	2.5e-1
Fairies		4.3c-1	4.3c-2			3.7c-4
Small Patterns		2.2b-2	2.5e-3		2.3d-1	3.8e-5
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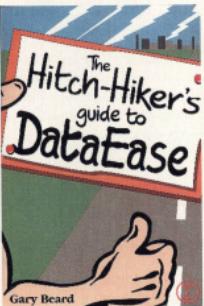
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Give the bedroom shelf cabbage a face lift



Enter an underwater world through the fish tank



Fatty swings around in a rubber ring in the back garden

Surprise, surprise

Age
3-7

Learn how to bake a
cake without being
able to read a recipe.

Kerry Culbert takes
up the challenge
with Fatty Bear's
Birthday Surprise

FATTY Bear's adventure takes place in his house. Kayla's birthday is near at hand, and Fatty and some friends decide to bake a birthday cake for the occasion and decorate her room before she wakes up. The problem is it's a big house with objects hidden

away where you'd least expect them. Keys to open doors must be found, along with letters to make a Happy Birthday wall frieze. The puppy dog has to be rounded up, and all the ingredients found to bake a cake.

FROM the same people who brought you Putt Putt Joins the Parade comes the latest in cartoon edutainment. All the graphical style and charming animation is present once more, as you and your child take on the role of Fatty Bear.

When the birthday cake has finally been baked it must be decorated. This involves manipulating an icing sugar alphabet to spell out birthday greetings. A creative way of spelling for 5 to 7-year-olds, but not much use for the 3 to 4-year-old who in all probability won't know the alphabet.

What the younger child will carry away from this game is an increased understanding of cause and effect. Children like routines, and the activities are highly structured. Not only must the ingredients be assembled for the cake but it must be baked.

A sense of realism is also encouraged as Fatty has to stand on steps to reach a bag of sugar from a high shelf in the garage. So with a little help from an adult, 3 to 4-year-olds will learn how to approach problems for themselves in a realistic way.

Although a manual isn't required owing to the easy

to follow directional arrows on screen and the spoken help from Matilda and friends, this package would work best as a group problem solving exercise or as a reciprocal exchange between father and child. To this extent it is interactive both on and off screen.

What children of all ages will be able to enjoy unaided are the smooth scrolling actions of characters and objects and the many amusing sound effects. Sardines in a kitchen cupboard seal themselves back in their tin, disgruntled at having been opened. Empty cupboards moo and the moon speaks.

Puppy amok

Clicking on some objects activates entertaining 3-D scenes. At the front of the house Fatty skateboards, and in the back garden he spins around inside a rubber ring. Meanwhile the puppy runs amok around the house creating mischief.

So, although the problem solving is quite hard going, there is some light entertainment along the way to hold the child's interest and see a task through to the end.

Following actions through is of prime importance



Assembled ingredients for baking a cake



Decorating is as easy as ABC



Look through a telescope in the back garden to see Putt Putt drive over craters



Sharpen music skills by playing the piano in the living room



Select objects from the fridge to bake a cake. Get the wrong ingredients and you'll have to start again



That puppy just get everywhere



The recipe for the birthday cake



Use garage steps to reach the bag of sugar

when acquiring new educational skills. There are also fun activities like star gazing, bowling on the lawn and playing tunes on the piano. The last is useful for developing music skills in the 7-year-old child and upwards.

The slick, smooth movements of the characters and the way the architecture changes perspective as the characters move through it is as striking as the walking movements in 7th Guest. Fatty doesn't simply enter a door to get from the bathroom to the basement. He slides down a chute which expands and contracts.

Unfortunately sorting out the sound card compatibility isn't such an attractive proposition. If your machine is a 386SX or downwards, you may run into problems. We did.

The solution was to remove EMM386.SYS from the CONFIG.SYS file. EMM386 is an expanded memory manager, but it can also slow down applications. With it removed the speech worked perfectly, which you'll need to hear to access to vital clues contained during the more sustained speaking sequences.

The support material backs up the fun and stylish approach of the software. There's a customised pencil and sharpener, crayons and an activity book featuring characters from the game.

From classification activities to shape sorting, the booklet reinforces what the software teaches, but again would suit the child of 5 plus more than the 3 to 4-year-old party pooper. The frisbee included in the box highlights the fact that above anything this game is intended to be fun.

Despite the fact Fatty Bear's Birthday Surprise was designed with an American audience in mind, it complies with national curriculum guidelines to some extent and problem solving skills are important across cultures.

It's the only multi-racial product I can think of – Kaylie is a little coloured girl – and it makes a refreshing change to see a black role model in a child's package. ■

PC HOME PROFILE

PRODUCT

Fatty Bear's Birthday Surprise

Supplier

Electronic Arts, 90 Heron Drive, Langley, Berks SL3 8XP

Tel

0753 549442

Price

£39.99

FOR

Fun for all ages, colourful and fully interactive. Great support material and superb 3-D

AGAINST

Not as interesting as Putt Putt or accessible enough for the average 3 to 4-year-old

Education options



Putt Putt Joins the Parade – Electronic Arts

0753 549442£39.99

Sets the design for Fatty Bear in terms of containing a fully interactive environment. At one point Putt Putt drives across a planet in Fatty Bear. Either of these packages will delight, but Putt Putt is a little too easy for 7-year-olds.

Reviewed: May 1993



Fun School 4 for 5-7s – Europress Software

0625 859333£24.99

Although the emphasis is more on education than startling graphics, this best selling range is the more serious choice with six activities to teach basic skills from typing to simple addition and alphabet manipulation, to 5 to 7 year-olds.



Beauty and the Beast – Infogrames

071-4948 7593£29

THE film quality dance sequences would enchant a child as young as three. The game sequences are more structured and closer to the national curriculum, but by and large not as interesting as the tasks in the Fatty Bear package.

Reviewed: September 1993

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Among the little people

FOR generations children have been nurtured on a diet of popular nursery songs and most children love Old MacDonald's Farm. Although Old MacDonald is nowhere to be seen on the Little People Farm, there are all the traditional

farm animals, most of which are somewhat eccentric.

Children can interact with the screen and create replicas of anything on the farm, and as such the package encourages interaction with other children and parents.

KEY stage 1 of the National Curriculum calls for: *Early learning programs which use pictures, bright colours and often friendly characters to teach the alphabet and simple words.*

Fisher Price's Little People Farm is certainly packed with brightly coloured barns and silage tanks, all seen through the changing seasons.

What could be more friendly than Aunt Myrtle's lips pursing to form a kiss just as a bubble appears on screen saying SMACK?

The trouble is that there is little depth to what the characters do, and as such the on-screen educational value of Little People Farm is limited. Click on a horse, and its name comes up on screen as a front leg twitches in conjunction with a wagging tail.

Yet click on the ground and nothing happens. In fully interactive packages like Putt Putt Joins the Parade almost everything on screen can be activated or interacted with.

We field tested the package on a range of children whom the package is aimed at. Springfield Pre-Preparatory School in Macclesfield is the only Mensa Chartered School in the UK, with 22 pupils aged from 2 to 7 years of age.

Gifted children

All the children are educationally gifted and encouraged to experiment with a wide variety of learning tools, including PC software. While most of the 11 pupils who used Little People Farm enjoyed some aspect of the package, the general impression was that nothing much happens on screen.

The lettering is also very confusing for pre-school

children. As the principal, Mary MacLean, told me: "The menu prompts at the bottom of the screen are written in a mixture of upper and lower case letters. This makes reading the words confusing for the children".

What they did like was the ability to rotate barns and silos and peer on the animals and mechanism in or around the architecture. Take the Winter barn. A front view features mice throwing a cheese ball to and fro. An alternative view depicts a puppy dog tug of war, and a third a hay loft with a mechanism to wind a hay bale up into the loft.

From the back view of the spring silo, tomato plants and melons mature with a simple click of the cursor. There are plenty of objects to interact with, unlike the people, animal and tractor screens.

Musical youth

Rotating objects is a good way to teach spatial relationships. In the autumn barn you see a mouse eating cheese from one side and the same mouse through a mouse hole on the other side.

What isn't as clear is the labelling of objects. A bird is called a birdie for example. This hardly follows National Curriculum guidelines.

The sound effects are fine, and the country and western tune playing in the background is effective, providing you install a compatible sound card. Debra Foulkes, an NNEB nursery nurse at Springfield, thought the music was very good.

Controlling the prompt on screen is a little problematic. You have to be directly on the object concerned, and the words which come up can be misleading. Take

Age
2-7

Kerry Culbert visits

the Little People

Farm for pre-school

children from the

new Fisher-Price

Creativity Kit

range. It's the Old

MacDonald of

the 1990s



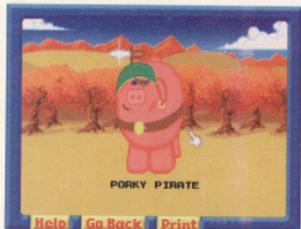
Make tomatoes grow and melons ripen



The winter tractor cuts a path through the snow

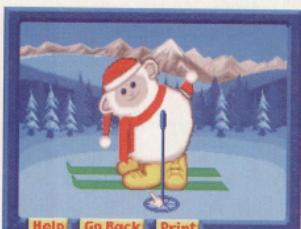


The clown's nose grows and water spurts out of his flower



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Porky pirate the pig juggles with his sword



[Help](#) [Go Back](#) [Print](#)

Ever seen a sheep skate?



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The cow goes moo

the water tub at the side of the winter silo. The word water tub isn't labelled, but a frog leaps out of the tub and is labelled. Similarly the pumpkins at the rear view of the autumn silo are not labelled.

What is easy for pre-school children to do is access the screens themselves without the help of a manual or aid of a parent. The main menu is a farmyard scene. Click on one of nine animal, architectural or machinery objects and a screen showing four variations of a pig or a horse appear.

Click on one of these and that environment is entered into. At the bottom of the screen is an option to go back. So you can roll back to the main menu screen with ease.

Yet this package really scores off screen rather than on it. Mrs MacLean told me that she particularly welcomed software with quality support material to reinforce computerised activities.

Spin off

Little People Farm comes to life off screen as children can select from over 200 different animations, click on an object and print it out. Next it can be coloured and cut out to construct a working farm. There is even paper and crayons included in the kit.

The manual consists largely of instructions on how to build villages, make playing cards and pop-up greeting cards. The instructions are easy to follow and clearly illustrated.

These spin off activities are where the real educational value of the package lie. Cutting and folding, colouring, taping and gluing and construction skills are all developed.

Creative thinking is encouraged by suggesting guessing games based on the farm, and drawing pictures of the seasons is suggested.

Little People Farm is ideal for working parents who want to spend quality time at home with their children.

This is not a kit for the passive, uncreative child or parent, but an ideal way to bring pre-school creativity into the home. If you want to improve the social skills of your child and get fully involved in their play then off the screen activities through. ■



The jury returns

HERE is a selection of the comments of children of Springfield Pre-Proprietary School, Macclesfield:

I liked the farmers. You can do lots with farmers. It's easy to highlight a word incorrectly which is confusing – Sebastian Revell, age 5

Little People farm doesn't have as many things as Putt Putt. That has lots of things you haven't done before. The upper case letters are difficult to read – Toby Revell, age 4
I'm not sure if I like it. The engine actions on the tractor are boring – Rachael Johnson, age 4

I like to see the man's name come up when you click on him – Holly Stewart, age 4

I like it – Emily Burgey, age 2

The clown's nose grows when you point on it. I liked that – Jonathan Wetton, age 3



Each animal, person, or object has a choice of four screens

PC HOME PROFILE	
PRODUCT	CREATIVITY KIT – LITTLE PEOPLE FARM
Price	£19.95
Supplier	Gametek, 5 Bath Road, Slough, Berks. SL1 3UA
Tel	0753 553445
FOR	Colourful, fun characters and interesting off-screen activities which develop creativity and sharpen spatial and art-based skills
AGAINST	On screen detail and accuracy lacking and the cursor is a little difficult for tiny tots to control

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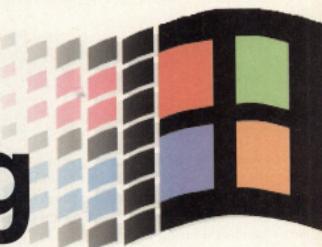
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Windows programming



DOS is dead! Long live Windows! It seems that everyone is turning to Windows as the operating system of the future. Although most people still occasionally use DOS for the odd application, Windows programs dominate most PC's hard disks. In this series I am showing how you can easily write your own applications for this graphical user interface using Microsoft's Visual Basic.

Last month we created a simple text editor, so let's develop it a bit further and add some extra features. Either load the program you created, or draw the form shown in Step 1 over the page if you missed the October issue of *PC Home*. A couple of changes need to be made and the first is to disable the maximise button.

Try clicking on this button and see what happens – none of the controls on the form is altered and the screen looks untidy. We could add code to move the controls and make the editing window bigger, but that's an advanced subject for later on in this series. For the moment, stop users maximising the window by disabling the button.

There's another way of altering a window's size and that's by clicking and dragging one of the edges or corners. Again, this will mess up our neatly designed form, so select the form, go to the properties window and click on BorderStyle. Choose 1 – Fixed Single to prevent users from resizing it.

There's still more work to be done on this form, so now click on the text box, Text1, and select the FontName property. You can now set the font name. Arial is a good choice, but you might prefer a typewriter font, such as Courier.

Go back to the properties and select FontSize. Choose the size from the list. The default 8.25 point is a bit small in Super VGA modes, so I have increased mine to 9.75 point.

Creating a button bar

A common feature of recent Windows applications is the button bar or tool bar. This is a row of buttons at the top of the program's window just under the menu. They provide fast access to some of the most common features and save you wading through half a dozen menus to find the command you need. One click and the command is executed.

You can do this in Visual Basic too. All you need to do is move the command buttons to the top of the form, just under the title bar. At the same time, add two new command buttons called Autoexec.bat and Config.sys. You'll need to adjust the width of the buttons and the form to make them fit exactly across the top in a line.

Now move and resize the Text1 text box so that it

fills the rest of the form as in Step 2 below. Take a good look at the form and notice how much more professional our simple text editor seems.

Adding the code

After designing the user interface – the form that the program will use – it is time to add the code that makes it all work. The aim of the Autoexec.bat and Config.sys command buttons are to speed up access to the basic PC configuration files. When you click on one of these the appropriate file is loaded ready for editing.

Since there is already a general Load button that can be used to load any text file, adding two more load procedures would mean repeating almost identical code three times. Whenever this situation arises it is best to write a general procedure or subroutine, so that's what we'll do.

Double click on any of the objects on the form to open the code window. Click on the Object list box and choose (general). In the right-hand list box (Declarations) will be displayed. Now type in:

```
sub loadfile(f$)
```

and a new procedure will be created with a corresponding End Sub. Enter the following code:

```
t$ = ""
Open f$ For Input As #1
Do
  Line Input #1, temp$
  t$ = t$ + Chr$(13) + Chr$(10) + temp$
Loop Until EOF()
Text1.Text = Mid(t$, 3)
Close #1
```

This general procedure will load the file whose name is stored in the string variable f\$. Now you can double click on the Autoexec.bat and Config.sys command buttons on the form and enter the appropriate line in the Sub procedure that is displayed in the code window:

```
Loadfile("c:\autoexec.bat")
Loadfile("c:\config.sys")
```

The general Load button can also make use of this

What the series covers

Part 1: August

Introducing Visual Basic. Designing a form and adding controls

Part 2: September

How to write a simple card index style database application

Part 3: October

Creating a simple, but useful Windows-based Ascii text editor

Part 4: November

Adding a button bar to the text editor to improve its ease of use

Part 5: December

Adding menu commands to build a better database program

The easiest way to write graphical applications is with Visual Basic.

Roland Waddilove shows how, in Part 4 of his tutorial series

general procedure. Double click on the Load button on the form and alter it to read:

```
Sub Command1_Click()
p$ = "Enter the filename"
file$ = InputBox$(p$)
If file$ = "" Then Exit Sub
loadfile (file$)
End Sub
```

It's about time you tried running your new text editor, so save the project and select Start on the Run menu. Try clicking on the two new buttons to load your configuration files and check that the right ones appear in the text box ready for editing.

You could develop the button bar idea further and add two new buttons, one for WIN.INI and the other for SYSTEM.INI – the two Windows configuration files. It's very easy and all you'll have to do is enter two short lines of Basic code after drawing the buttons on the form. I'll leave that project to you.

● *That's all for this month. Next time I'll show how you can add pull-down menus to your Visual Basic for Windows applications. ■*

The full text editor listing

```
Sub Command1_Click()
p$ = "Enter the filename"
file$ = InputBox$(p$)
If file$ = "" Then Exit Sub
loadfile (file$)
End Sub

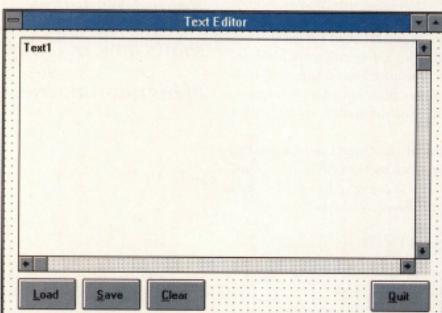
Sub Command2_Click()
p$ = "Enter filename"
file$ = InputBox$(p$)
If file$ = "" Then Exit Sub
Open file$ For Output As #1
Print #1, Text1.Text;
Close #1
End Sub

Sub Command3_Click()
Text1.Text = ""
End Sub

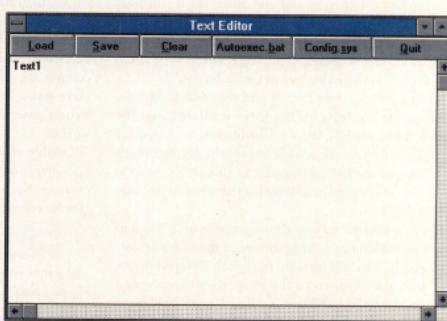
Sub Command4_Click()
End Sub

Sub Command5_Click ()
loadfile ("c:\autoexec.bat")
End Sub

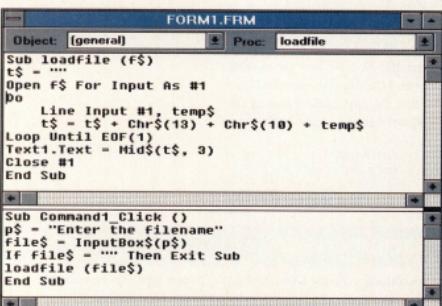
Sub Command6_Click ()
loadfile ("c:\config.sys")
End Sub
```



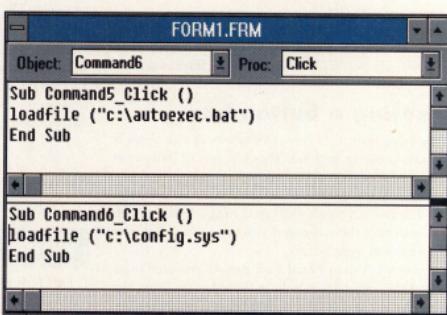
Step 1: This is the simple text editor that we developed in last month's tutorial. Load it and click on the Text1 text box. Go to the properties window and click on FontName. Choose a suitable font, such as Arial or Courier. Select the FontSize property and set it to the size you prefer.



Step 2: Here I have moved the command buttons up to the top of the window and added one called Autoexec.bat and one called Config.sys. It now looks similar to the button bars used in many Windows programs. The Text1 text box has been enlarged so that it exactly fits the window.



Step 3: In the code window select the (general) object in the left-hand list box and (declarations) in the right. Enter the `loadfile` procedure into this. Then alter the Command1_Click procedure (the Load button). To display two procedures, click and drag the thick black line at the top of the scroll bar.



Step 4: The final bit of code is entered into the procedures for the two new command buttons. If you haven't altered the control names of the Autoexec.bat and Config.sys command buttons, these will be Command5_Click() and Command6_Click(). Notice how simple the code is



Sing-a-long

So who's this Gary Okie then? I went down the pub to do the research, and he didn't turn up (*No Jake, it's Karaoke, where amateurs sing-a-long to a backing track – Ed.*)

*That beige box
sitting in your home
can do more than
just word process
and play games.
Jake Farman shows
how – with a
microphone in one
hand and a song
sheet in the other*

LET'S face it, pouncing about the house with a hairbrush for a microphone, or tennis racket instead of a guitar, is all good fun but it's not as good as those Karaoke nights down the Dog and Duck, is it? What you need is something to turn that expensive Multimedia PC into a Karaoke machine, right?

With PC Karaoke, you can do just that. Marvellous. And all your favourites are here – New York New York, Twist and Shout and the classic (hum hum) Bryan Adams hit (Everything I do) I do it for you.

So what do you need? Basically any true MPC-compliant PC will do. Your sound card must have mixing facilities, as you'll need to adjust the sound level of the microphone which plugs into the input channel. Having a decent Hi-Fi on the output will certainly add to the effect. Karaoke with headphones somewhat misses the point.

The PC Karaoke pack provides a CD-Rom of software and 12 music tracks, along with a good quality microphone – heavyweight metal housing, with proper three pin connector and a good 15 feet of cable. Yes you really can dance around the house with this little baby. In fact, position the bed correctly and you can recreate that stage-running-up-the-middle-of-Wembley sensation. But I digress.

Installation is simple. 3Mb of files are copied on to the hard disk for the Windows-based Karaoke program, with a few extra kilobytes for the Video for Windows runtime player, if you haven't already got it installed.

It's all very easy to use. The screen splits into 16 sec-

I wondered why that guy in the Union Jack shorts was singing *Ingerland-Ingerland-Ingerland* to the tune of We are the World.

Yes, it's all much clearer now.

tions – 12 showing pictures relating to each song. Oh, Pretty Woman for example is depicted by er, a pretty woman. The other boxes are used for showing some irritating video clips of a KJ (Karaoke Jockey).

Clicking on a picture starts the track. The music is of good quality as it is played directly from the CD-Rom (not reproduced from the sound card), and there are backing vocals on some tracks, which add to the effect.

The words to the song are shown in a large sized font on-screen. When each word (or syllable) changes from white to yellow, you sing it. Or attempt to sing it. Obviously it helps if you know the song. A few runs through, and it all becomes natural.

While the concept is undoubtedly a good one, and this package is both fun and easy to use, I have a few minor gripes. Firstly, the user interface is perhaps too basic.

When a clip of the KJ starts there is no way of stopping it, which becomes very annoying. And when a song is playing, you can only press Esc to stop it. There is no pause or rewind – a cassette style interface would be a vast improvement.

The biggest drawback, however, is the price. At £82 it's probably too much for a toy which you'll only use occasionally.

You would have to be pretty sad to use this on your own at home, but if you're having a party (lets face it, Christmas is only around the corner) with money to burn, then I can definitely recommend PC Karaoke. In fact, miss this and you'll be *Crazy* (cue music).



The choice is almost endless. Well there are 12 songs to choose from anyway



Warren at our sister mag PC today, or Friends in Low Places as it's sometimes known



Another dodgy picture for another dodgy song



Jukebox

The full track listing for PC Karaoke:

New York, New York
Oh, Pretty Woman
Can't Help Falling in Love
Crazy
You've Lost That Loving
Feeling
Unforgettable
Endless Love
How Will I Know?
Twist and Shout
(Everything I Do) I do it for
you
The Rainbow Connection
I Got Friends in Low Places



What no Careless Whisper? I hear you ask. Sorry, no – you'll have to buy one of the extra discs, which are available for around £15.

Titles include It Takes Two To Du-et (12 Duets), and Hot Hunks, a disc of 80s and 90s hits featuring the likes of Michael Bolton, George Michael and Phil Collins.

PC HOME PROFILE

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PC KARAOKE 3.1 FOR WINDOWS

Price £82.24 (£69.99 ex VAT)

Supplier Crescent Computers International, Building 3, Main Drive, East Lane, Wembley, Middlesex HA9 7NA

Tel 081-385 0190

FOR Good microphone, fun to use

AGAINST Interface too basic, too pricey

DIY Karaoke

YOU don't actually need to buy a pack like this to have your own PC-based Karaoke system. Put any audio disc in your CD-Rom drive, plug a microphone into the sound card and you can sing along with the artist.

However, many CDs, especially singles, have instrumental versions and some have the lyrics printed on the inlay card. Of course, you can always make-up your own words – no one will notice.

Shakespeare Macbeth

IS this Karaoke Shakespeare I see before me? Indeed it is, and after singing Bryan Adams, a bit of culture may well come as a welcome relief. Although Karaoke Macbeth sounds like it's going to be one big joke this is, in fact, an educational title and a pretty good one at that.

It works on two levels. The text viewer allows you to analyse the script, save acts to disk, print them out and search for particular sections. The occasional picture which accompanies some of the scenes help to liven things up a little.

The real action starts when you open the Karaoke section. You're greeted with a rather nice animation of The Globe theatre where old Willy used to hang out a bit.

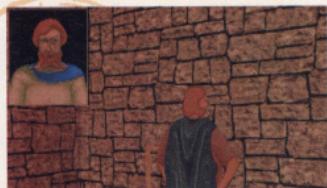
Choose an act and you're treated to more animations (a different one for each scene) which look very similar at times to scenes from 7th Guest. The characters are shown on screen but only with the minimum of movement. They don't walk on, they just appear.

Each sentence is shown at the bottom of the screen and spoken from CD-Rom. Occasionally, a special effect is thrown in. The witches' voices echo in the caves. Very nice.

To join in, you replace a character's name with your own, then when your line comes up, the CD-Rom is silenced, and you read the words from the screen. There's nothing to stop you from acting out all the characters, so this title will obviously work well in a classroom environment.

Aural notes are included for some of the scenes, to explain the storyline. Again this is great for students, especially younger ones.

This Dos program runs straight from CD-Rom, so you won't need to waste valuable hard disk space. Any MPC-compatible machine will run the disc, but I'd recommend a double speed drive – the animations were a bit sluggish on my Mitsumi.



Macbeth



Old Siward

This way, my lord. The castle's gently rendered.



The Castle's gently rendered. Blimey! It is as well



After five stressful acts, Macbeth gets the chop

PC HOME PROFILE

PRODUCT

KARAOKE MACBETH

Price £75 (£63.83 ex VAT)

Supplier Albemarle House, Osbourne Road, Southsea, Hampshire PO5 3LB

Tel 0705 291866

FOR Good, fun way to learn the story of Macbeth

AGAINST Very expensive

Some mags are

to be tasted, others

P C Action...

to be swallowed,

the shape of

and some few

things to come.

to be chewed

Look out...

and digested.'

Groucho Marx
(1890-1977)

Batch moves

MS-DOS has been improved and refined many times since its launch over 10 years ago, but even so, it never seems to include some of the basic utilities we need. For instance, we have had to wait until version 6.0 for a simple Dos *MOVE* command to move files from one disk/directory to another.

Before this version, the only way of moving a file was to copy it and then delete it afterwards. This requires typing in at least two lines at the Dos prompt – more if the destination directory doesn't exist, for then you'll have to create it first.

For example, to move several graphics files stored as GIFs and PCXs on a floppy disk in drive A to the C:\PICTURES directory you would have to type five lines of complex Dos commands:

```
md c:\pictures
copy a:\*.gif c:\pictures /v
copy a:\*.pcx c:\pictures /v
del a:\*.gif
```

The /v parameter forces the *COPY* command to check that the files have been copied without error – always a wise decision before deleting the originals.

Whenever you find yourself entering lots of complex Dos command lines look for a batch file to simplify the process. In this article I'll show how the above five lines can be reduced to one simple command such as:

```
move c:\pictures a:\*.gif a:\*.pcx
```

What an improvement! This is much better than the original, but how can we write such a utility for non-Dos 6 users? Well, all is revealed in the listing on this page.

The program isn't half as complicated as it might at first seem because many of the lines are there simply to handle errors, such as the destination disk being write protected, the user forgetting to enter any files to copy and so on.

A MOVEing description

Let's take a close look at the *MOVE* batch program. The first line tells Dos not to display the lines as they are run. Without it, the screen looks a mess – take it out and see. The *MOVE* utility requires a minimum of two parameters, so if one or none is found an error message is displayed by line 2 (the "062" parameter will be "").

The batch file variable *destination* is created and set to the destination directory parameter. The reason is that the parameters are shifted and lost later on. The next two lines check that the destination directory exists and if it doesn't, it is created:

```
if exist %1\con goto ok
md %1
```

Unfortunately, in a batch program you can't check that a directory exists, only a file. Dos uses special devices that appear to be standard filenames to repre-

sent the keyboard (CON), printer (LPT1 or PRN) and so on.

No matter what drive and directory you are in, these can be accessed. Therefore, we can check that they exist in the destination directory and if they don't we have to make the directory with *MD*.

To allow for many parameters to be entered on to the command line, the *SHIFT* command is used to shift them left into the first parameter position, %1, for processing. So if we passed *.GIF and *.PCX as in the example earlier, %1 would be *.GIF after the first shift, then *.PCX after the second.

After the third shift it would be nothing, or "". That's why, a bit further down the listing, you'll see a line that says:

```
if not "%2"==" goto ok
```

It is checking for any more parameters – files to move – and jumps back to the start if there is.

The *XCOPY* command is used to copy the files from the source directory to the destination. Why not use *COPY*? There are two reasons and the first is that *XCOPY* is faster because it makes better use of the PC's memory when copying files. It reads all the files into memory and then writes them all out in one go, rather than one at a time as *COPY* does.

That's not the most important reason though, *XCOPY* is better because it returns an error number if there is a problem. We can look at the value and then take the appropriate action. That's the reason for all the lines with *IF ERRORLEVEL...* in. The rest of the listing from line nine onwards is simply all the error reports that *XCOPY* can produce. ■

MOVE.BAT is on the MegaDisk

```
echo off
if "%2"==" goto error1
set destination=%1
if exist %1\con goto ok
md %1
:ok
shift
xcopy %1\%destination% /v
if errorlevel 5 goto error5
if errorlevel 4 goto error4
if errorlevel 2 goto error2
if errorlevel 1 goto error1
del %1
if not "%2"==" goto ok
echo File(s) moved OK.
```

```
goto exit
error5
echo Disk write error!
goto exit
error4
echo Error: Ram! Drive! Space!
goto exit
error2
echo Ctrl+C pressed!
goto exit
error1
echo Nothing to move!
echo MOVE destination file1 file2...
exit
```



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What Have You Missed From The First 12 Months?



November 1992 Volume 1 Issue 1

The very first issue. Features include the first part in a series on PC graphics, playing the piano with the help of your PC, and editing home videos. Plus reviews of disk compression software, colour printers, and personal organizers. Games reviewed included B17, NFL, The Legend of Kyrandis, PGA Golf for Windows, and Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker. The coverdisk includes demos of Legend and Paintshop Pro.



December 1992 Volume 1 Issue 2

The main features included 3-D animation, virtual reality, part two of the series on PC graphics and cable TV. Hardware reviews included scanners, fax machines and 486s. Software reviews covered Catacombs of the Abyss, Civilization, Darkseed, The Dagger of Amos Ra and David Leedster's Goll. The coverdisk featured Alone in the Dark, System76 file manager and the PKZip compression utilities.



January 1993 Volume 1 Issue 3

Everything you need to know about sound cards, MIDI and music software. We also cover image processing, fonts, CD-Roms and low cost printing options. Games reviewed included Reach for the Skies, The Summoning, Wewers, Omar Sharif's Bridge, Commerce Overkill, Alone in the Dark and Populous II. The coverdisk contains Norton Backup, Nelly's Playtime and a selection of Windows games.



February 1993 Volume 1 Issue 4

More feature on using your PC for video grabbing and editing. Other features include 3-D animation, music, a buyers' guide to PCs and computers for small business use. Games reviewed included Dune II, Legends of Valor, Starfire, King's Quest VI and Formula 1 Grand Prix. The coverdisk programs included Toward, Central Point Virus Scanner, PC Tax Adviser and Crosswords for Windows.



March 1993 Volume 1 Issue 5

This issue includes a series of articles and reviews of multimedia hardware and software, and a guide to installing a CD-Rom drive. Also featured is PC graphics to video, and a round up of hobbies software, from fax reading to genealogy. Games covered in this issue include Ultima Underworld II, The Incredible Machine, Ices and Space Crucade. The coverdisk contains Calendar Creator, Light Aircraft Simulator, and Professional Capture Systems.



April 1993 Volume 1 Issue 6

Special feature this month was a step-by-step guide to upgrading your PC, including motherboards and disk drives. Other features are a guide to joysticks, a review of PC-PC connection options, and a look at the MegapC. Games featured are The Humans, El-Fish, Lemmings 2, Stunt Island and Quest for the MegapC. The coverdisk contains Microsoft Money, Formula 1 Grand Prix and Fun School 3.



May 1993 Volume 1 Issue 7

Cover feature is part one of a two part on memory and the problems that PCs use. Also covered are budget drives, software databases and an introduction to using spreadsheets. Games reviewed include X-Wing, Jordan in Flight, Spear of Destiny, Shadow of the Comet, and Shadow President. The coverdisk brings you Timewalks Publisher Lite, Smartscars and Ultra Men.



June 1993 Volume 1 Issue 8

Budget PCs and printers dominate this month, with a feature on computer superstars. Also part 2 of the feature on memory, and a look at personal organisers and music sequencers. Games reviewed include Strike Commander, The Serpent Isle, Space Hulk, and a look at some of the budget games available. On the coverdisk are Worlds of Legend, Outside In, Fentaware and Leaper.



July 1993 Volume 1 Issue 9

This month's main feature is a review of some of the best value graphics cards available. Also featured is a review of music making software, inkjet printers and hand-held scanning. Games included Megadrive, Far Future III, The Legacy, Eye of the Beholder III and Freddy Pharkas. The coverdisk contains PC Tools - SI - Beast and the Beast, ImageMaster, FormatMaster, ASQ and System Information.



August 1993 Volume 1 Issue 10

Features include the new generation of fast CD-Rom drives, music software and hardware, computer desks and language translators. Games reviewed included Syndicate, Space Legends, Sensible Soccer, Championship Manager 93 and Premier Manager, composed and Betrayal of Kynaris. There is also a round up of shareware games. The coverdisk contained Laser 2, ViewPoint, IronWorks and Job Hunt.



September 1993 Volume 1 Issue 11

This month's main feature is a review of the best painting and image processing packages, including a guide to what to look for before you buy, and all the terms involved. Reviews include monitors, MPCs,奔腾 GUs and music software. This month's games selection includes Tornado, Fields of Glory, Pinball Dreams, Day of the Tentacle and Return of the Phantom. The coverdisk brings you Intellidraw, Phage Fight and a whole host of utilities.



October 1993 Volume 1 Issue 12

Camcorder and PC linkups are the main feature this month, with a look at editing and viewing home movies on your PC, and a review of the hardware and software required. Also examined are entertainment bundles, Windows Paintbrush, low-cost point and image processing and word-processors. Games include Lords of Lore, Railroad Tycoon Deluxe, The Patriot and Blade of Destiny. The coverdisk includes Dashboard, Sink or Swim, Fest! and Sea/Go-Menu.

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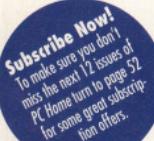
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101 Games, 101 Games 2

Crabs, Pacman, Space Invaders

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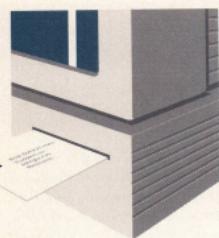
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Write Home

IF you have something to say, a point to raise, issue to debate or tip to share, don't keep it to yourself. Put wordprocessor to printer, or pen to paper, and write to Write Home, PC Home, Europa House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4NP. There's a free 12 issue subscription to *PC Home* for the best letter each month.

Shopping around

 I REFER to your article back in February entitled *Invest for the future*. You wrote about first time buyers having to check the specifications thoroughly to make sure the machine suits their requirements.

I am about to embark on a major purchase of a 486 machine and a colour printer. Although I use a computer every day at work, I have little idea as to what specifications I need.

Jargon like rom, bytes, local bus, CPU, MS-DOS and so on mean little to me.

It's a shame that none of the computer magazines offers a section for beginners like myself. Are there any publications/books devoted to us? – E. THORNTON-CHAN, Cheadle Hulme

PCH: A wide variety of books is available for the beginner, but if you are specifically looking for one to help you make a first time purchase we can recommend, *The*

Pitfalls of Buying a PC (ISBN: 1 897899 00 9) available from Silicon Valley (0727 874577) price £3.50.

For anyone familiar with using a PC but wanting to know what's going on under the bonnet *Self Teaching Guide – DOS*, available from Computer Manuals (021-706 6000), priced £19.95 should shed some light on the matter.

Both books were reviewed in the August 1993 issue of *PC Home*.

Good all-rounder

 I AM a home user who enjoys programming, mainly in C and Assembler. I read a variety of computer magazines, but I find yours one of the best as it includes a bit of something for everyone. Having said this, I would like to see a few more technical articles aimed at programmers.

I have written an encryption program, using DES encryption and my own algorithm. Comparing my own program to the

shareware versions, I feel that I could successfully sell it as shareware.

My problem is how to go about this. Do I just send it to a shareware dealer or do I have to sell it myself? – ADRIAN FAVRE, SURREY

PCH: Selling by the shareware route only really works if you make your product available to the widest possible audience. That means sending copies to every major shareware library, and if you have the facilities, uploading it to bulletin boards, especially international ones like CompuServe.

Just make sure that your software contains details on registration and also a version number, so that if you update it at a later date, libraries will be able to delete the old one from their files and flag the new one in catalogues.

Getting serious

 HAVING owned a ZX81, ZX Spectrum and a SAM Coupe, I decided it was time to get serious about computing and buy a PC.

I decided upon a 486SX with a 25MHz processor. It has everything I could ever possibly need, except memory.

I read your article a few months ago, which explained the best way of freeing up conventional memory for running programs which need lots of base memory – the Formula One Grand Prix demo for example. This is where I have a problem.

My computer runs under DR DOS version 6.0 and try as I might, I cannot get that demo to load, even though I have over 626k of conventional memory.

At first I thought it was the demo program, but I have recently bought a copy of Lemmings 2 – the Tribes, installed it on my machine

to take fullest advantage of my system (MCGA and SoundBlaster with full FX) and guess what, this program won't load either.

I get the error 1: *Not enough memory of required type*. At the same time, the same program is telling me that I have 250k of conventional memory free and over 2Mb of expanded memory free.

Could you please tell me where I am going wrong? – B. POLKINGHORNE, PRESTWICH

PCH: While you say that you have over 626k of conventional memory and 2Mb of expanded memory free, is that 626k of base memory and 2Mb of total ram or extended ram? To find out how much base memory you have, type in:

REN

If you do have 626k of base ram free you should be able to run the program with no memory conflicts.

That being the case we can only assume it is the fault of DR DOS 6, as the program is only guaranteed to work with MS-DOS.

Alternatively, you should call our Megadisk hotline (0625 858084) and speak to our full time expert, Paul Askew who can ask you more detailed questions on your hardware and software setup, and endeavour to get you up and running with that excellent demo.

Don't believe all

 I SAW an advert in your August issue for language disks. This was a computer assisted learning course as part of the IT Education requirements within the National Curriculum up to GCSE standard, normally available to education.

This seemed like an excellent offer and just what my family wanted. Unfortunately, I was soon disappointed, because on starting level 1 German it was obvious the programs were far from accurate.

A helping hand



I WRITE with reference to the letter by Paul Fitzgerald in your September issue as an ex-member of the Philips Technical team providing support for PCs, monitors and printers. I can inform Mr Fitzgerald that the battery type he requires for his PCD200 (and PCD300 for that matter) is a Tadiran

TL52342/2/W, a 3.6V lithium battery. The Philips Service part No is

4822 138 10448.

Alternatively, if Mr Fitzgerald can find a local dealer who can order parts from RS Components then the RS part No 594-274 will provide an identical battery and is a suitable substitute. If this does not prove successful then a company, PSA (081-944 6694) in South London who specialise in batteries for use with computer systems may be of assistance.

As for Mr Fitzgerald's printer, may I suggest he looks at ribbons for a Seikosha SP1299 – the Philips NMST1433 is identical. I'm afraid that I am not in possession of the Karma code that normally relates ribbons to printers.

I hope this information is of some use to Mr Fitzgerald and anyone else with Philips PCD range of computers. – KEN FORD, SURREY

Not only were there spelling mistakes with the English text on the German program, but there were many programming and grammar errors.

For instance, the words *beowl* and *boulder* should have been, in fact, *below* and *border*. Not much to worry about, but you must bear in mind these programs were supposed to be GCSE standards.

Worse was to come. You are asked the German for *How are you?*. The answer should be *Wie gehts?* but you are told the answer is *es geht*. This means *I am alright*.

In answer to being asked how to greet a friend you are given *tshuss* which means *goodbye*. There were many other errors, but at the worst this false information could affect exam results.

As the complete language course consisted of German, French, Spanish, Italian and English EFL (English for Foreigners) I was appalled at the prospect of what the other language errors there might be.

I realise you have no responsibility for software offered for sale in your magazine but I feel other readers should be aware of the problems they could encounter. I have returned the disks and requested a refund as well as detailing the inaccuracies.

Having lived in Germany, it does not surprise me that we, as a nation, have such a poor reputa-

tion for learning languages, if Education buys programs like these. — William Jones, Radcliffe

PCH: *It's the job of computer magazine writers to test and report on the good points and the bad of software offered for sale.*

The moral of this story is to check the magazines – including PC Home which has a large regular educational section – for reviews of products in which you are interested. If you can't find any, ask around, talk to friends who may have bought the program and ask at software shops.

If you still can't find an authoritative opinion on the software you intend to buy your best bet is to buy it by credit card, which gives an added level of protection. If the software demonstrably fails to live up to advertised expectations, by not being suitable for the task it claimed, by law you are entitled to your money back.

It's in the post



I WOULD like to address an issue that I have not seen brought up in letters pages. My resentment concerns the cost of postage for software applications.

You may indeed quote that the price of postage includes the safe despatch of goods from vendor to end user in condition deemed

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acceptable, and possibly a handling charge.

However, it appears to me as detrimental to pay £8 to £10 plus VAT for a product that is likely to arrive after payment clearance (within two to three days of order receipt).

I consider it to be extortionate to charge £12 delivery for a version upgrade from the manufacturer, in return for a product of which I am a registered user. I find it shocking that a £29 registered user upgrade becomes almost a £50 debit on my cheque book.

I have worked for the postal service, and I know the cost of postage for products of approximately that size.

A competitive upgrade or otherwise becomes less so when add-ons such as VAT and especially postage are levied. — Terry Vassell, London

PCH: *There can be little actual financial reason for charging such amounts, and even if the upgrade refers to which you refer comes to £41 rather than near £50, it certainly ramps up the cost.*

One of the reasons you may find

More space please



AS A subscriber to your magazine who works away, (I have just returned from five months in Thailand) I have long periods devoid of good reading, but on my return have a whole pile of magazines to catch up with.

My problem is that I have run out of hard disk space. In today's market with the size that most programs take up, that is not hard to do. I have a Toshiba 3200SX laptop with 40Mb hard drive which can be upgraded to 120Mb HD for what I consider a lot of money because it is a Toshiba. The problem is that if I then add Windows, Word and Excel to my machine even the 120Mb HD would soon be full.

I have seen advert for such things as removable hard disks for the same amount of money as my quote for the Toshiba 120Mb HD upgrade. Would this be a good way to go?

Eventually as I have two young children I would like to add a CD-Rom to the system. If I purchased this first would it take away the need for the extra hard disk space?

Why don't I just part exchange the whole lot and get it all in one neat box. She who must be obeyed

has a problem working the on/off button on the Toshiba as it is, and would not be amused at £1,500/2,000 disappearing from the bank account, but small upgrades can possibly be managed without too many headaches.

Thank you for your help in this matter. Keep up the good work. — M.F. Cross, Kent

PCH: *Simply upgrading the hard drive is certainly an easy approach, and if 120Mb isn't enough you may want to consider installing MS-DOS 6 and using DoubleSpace to produce over 200Mb of storage. If you don't intend to run many games on your portable this would be the most cost efficient method of increasing storage space.*

Whether you add a CD-Rom or not is immaterial since they do not offer user storage facilities, merely the chance to access large volumes of data.

As to whether you go for the part exchange to a desktop option, it all really depends on what you use your PC for, and more importantly where it is used. If you use it while travelling a lot, there seems to be little point in changing to a desktop machine.

for such charges is simply this: Mail order is a competitive business and to offer the apparently lowest cost for a product, thus eating the company's margins down to very little in the case of some products, it is necessary to recoup the money somewhere else.

Postage and packaging is an easy target. The answer is to simply add up the total cost from each potential supplier, and be aware that the headline price for a product will invariably not be what it will cost you to buy it.

Beautiful beast

I BOUGHT the July issue of PC Home on the strength of the Beauty and the Beast disk. However, is it me? I searched for a contact point to obtain the full package – my daughter is nuts about it.

Unfortunately I can't see an address or telephone number for the supplier anywhere.

Please let me have details of where the full product can be bought. — A. Tolland, Halifax

PCH: *Beauty and the Beast should be available from most software vendors and mail order operations but if all else fails you can contact Infogrames on 071-738 8199 who will be able to supply a full version.*

Batchy bits best

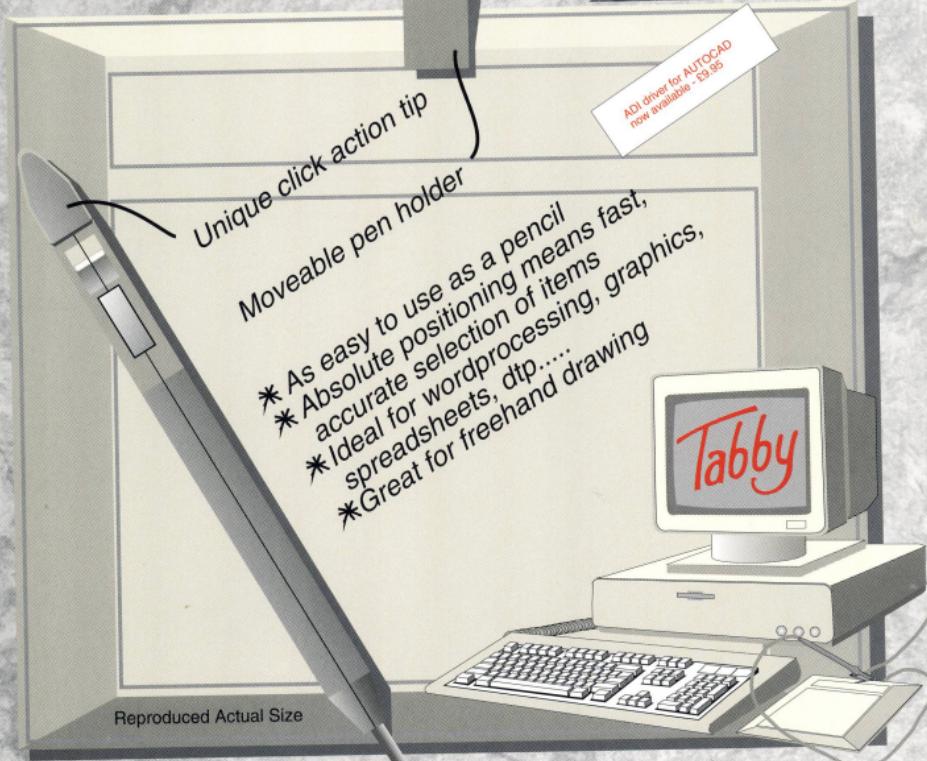
 LET me begin by congratulating you on a great mag, as far as I am concerned it is best on the market.

I am very impressed by Roland Waddilove's batch file articles, they are very informative without being overly technical.

Another thing that makes your mag great is the quality of the cover disks. — Simon Johnstone, Southampton

PCH: *The purpose of regulars like Batchy Bits is to let you get to grips with your PC and get it to do what you want, make it more productive or easier to use, and all in a language which everyone can understand.* ■

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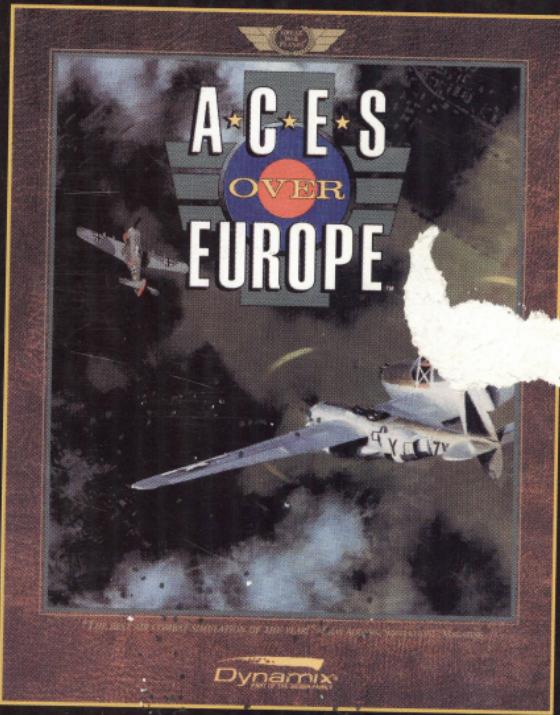
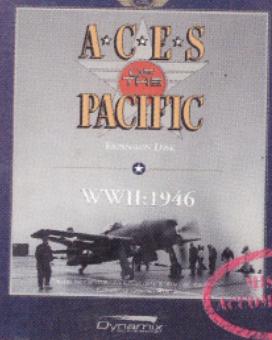
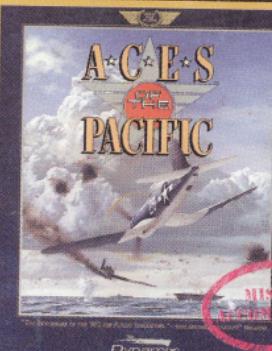
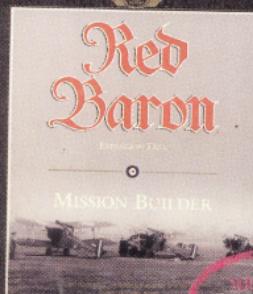
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